The Twofold Power of the Gospel

By CLYDE V. HICKERSON

THESE SERMONS are a clear and convincing presentation of a Christ sufficient for the needs of mankind; for both the individual and society; for the life that now is and the life that is to be. The author stresses that the way out and up for our individual lives is to obey the challenge of Jesus of Nazareth.

They are courageous, truthful utterances, challenging in thought, and interesting in presentation—messages which apply the eternal Gospel to the needs of men and women today.

THE TWOFOLD POWER OF THE GOSPEL

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By
CLYDE V. HICKERSON

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PRINTED IN THE U. S. A.

TO THE MEMORY OF
FLORENCE BROWN HICKERSON
MY MOTHER

16,731

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THE TWOFOLD POWER OF THE GOSPEL

From that time began Jesus to preach, and to say, Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.—Matthew 4:17.

THE GLORY OF THE GOSPEL is its transforming power. Whenever and wherever Christ's message has been presented in its fullness, individuals have been regenerated and human relationships have been purified and exalted. The twofold power of the Gospel is seen therefore in the redemption of the individuals and the transformation of society. Jesus is too great to be the Saviour of only a fractional part of life. He came to give men life and to proclaim the kingdom of God, in which a redeemed humanity was to be realized. His program calls for victory over evil in the individual and the combating of destructive forces of life about us.

The great heresy is to put asunder that which Christ has joined together. In his never-to-be-forgotten conversation with Nicodemus he revealed the

nature and demand of the Gospel: "Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God." For truly has it been said that there is no political alchemy by which you can get golden conduct out of leaden instincts. The way to a reclaimed society is through redeemed men and women. When one phase of the Christian message is neglected deep spiritual losses are sustained. There can be no lasting program for the betterment of society apart from the spiritual vision and impulse; and there can be no complete victory for a religious program that does not include the reformation of society. When the followers of Christ misunderstand his plan, their work will not only be ineffective but will often be found hindering the cause represented. That this has happened almost continuously through the centuries is one of the most tragic facts of history. It is not a matter of choice between preaching a Gospel to individuals or bringing a message that challenges every institution that bars the way to mankind's highest welfare. We are to do both. Ours is not a restricted program of "either one or the other," but "both one and the other."

It is then the inescapable duty of ministers of

Christ to make people see and feel uneasy about present-day evils that degrade human life. "Any church," Dr. Fosdick has declared, "that pretends to care for the souls of people, but is not interested in the slums that damn them, the city government that corrupts them, the economic order that cripples them, and international relationships that, leading to peace or war, determine the spiritual destiny of innumerable souls—that kind of church, I think, would hear again the Master's withering words: 'Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!' " [1]

In the first place, the nature and expression of the Christian message reveal its twofold power.

In that masterful apologetic of the Christian faith delivered by Stephen to the hostile audience in Jerusalem there is the retelling of Moses' call to be Jehovah's servant and his people's leader: "I have surely seen the affliction of my people that is in Egypt, and have heard their groaning, and I am come down to deliver them: and now come, I will send thee into Egypt." The man Moses was first brought into right relationship with God, and then through him God

[1] Harry Emerson Fosdick, *The Hope of the World,* Harper & Bros., p. 25.

worked to change the life and the environment of a nation. God is here portrayed as one who is deeply concerned over the plight of the Hebrew slaves. The exodus from Egypt was not only a spiritual triumph, but at the same time a social reformation. We cannot believe that God, more than thirty centuries later, is unconcerned over the sufferings of countless millions of his people by reason of man's inhumanity to man. And Moses, after he had accepted God's commission, was not primarily concerned with his own salvation, but with the salvation of his brethren who were in bondage.

As one reviews the life and work of the Hebrew seers he is impressed with their concern for both the spiritual and the physical welfare of the people. The prophets were primarily impassioned messengers of spiritual truth and preachers of religion. Some of them were statesmen and social reformers also. This was the result of their insight into the nature of God and a conviction of their duty to their fellow men. Among those who came forth from the presence of God with a burning message against the evils that laid waste the people was the fearless Amos, saying: "Ye have built houses of hewn stone, but ye shall

not dwell in them; ye have planted pleasant vineyards, but ye shall not drink the wine thereof. For I know how manifold are your transgressions, and how mighty are your sins; ye that afflict the just, that take a bribe, and that turn aside the needy in the gate from their right." His plea is to "let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream." Again, listen to the seraphic Isaiah, himself cleansed by Jehovah, lashing out against those who had created conditions that brought a reproach on the name of religion and misery to the multitudes: "Hear the word of Jehovah, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. . . . . Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves; every one loveth bribes, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them." But the prophet looks forward to a better day when "Zion shall be redeemed with justice, and her converts with righteousness." Consider also the testimony of Micah, who beholds an oppressed and exploited people, and takes up their case against the oppressors. "And they covet fields, and seize them; and houses, and take them away: and they oppress a man and his

house, even a man and his heritage." This prophet, too, presents a positive program as he so earnestly beseeches his generation to find God's way. "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

It is not surprising that the men who perceived the conditions and the causes thereof, and had the courage to cry out against those who were responsible, should receive the scorn and the hatred which produced persecution and sometimes martyrdom itself. And the man who follows in their train and declares the whole counsel of God is apt to fare no better at the hands of the defenders of the status quo today.

There have always been some who insist that Jesus has no word for the economic and social problems confronting civilization. To be sure, Jesus was no social reformer, and neither can we find in his words any plan for economic readjustment or a program for the regulation of society. There are two ways in which an entrenched evil may be attacked: one is the frontal or the direct approach; the other is to drop an idea or a principle down beside a wrong and in time that ideal will challenge the existence of

that wrong. This latter method we believe was Jesus' method of dealing with all that was hostile to the highest welfare of mankind. Did not the Master sum up true religion as love of God with one's whole being and love of neighbor as oneself? His teaching of the worth of the individual and the brotherhood of man forbids that men should degrade and exploit their brothers for the sake of gain or power. The institution of slavery was not specifically condemned by Jesus, yet no intelligent Christian today would argue that the holding of men in bondage is consistent with the spirit of the Gospel. Jesus dropped an ideal down beside this age-old and powerful custom; the centuries passed—and the ideal arose and destroyed slavery. There are a number of great problems confronting us on which Jesus spoke no direct word, but no one doubts his influence in the lives of those who are striving to solve them.

One generation sees in the Gospel that which former generations dreamed not of: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." As time goes on and a generation faces new and bewildering situations some find the principles in Christ's message, hitherto undiscovered, which lead

toward the changing of those conditions for the better. This is surely one illustration of what is meant by the timelessness of the Gospel and the sufficiency of our Lord's words for the entire life of man. We do not look to the Gospel for details or rules of action in the complex situations which confront us. A student once said of his teacher, "He flung down a bunch of keys." That is what Jesus did. And Dr. Luccock adds that "He flings down a bunch of keys —insights, principles, a spirit, which unlock the doors of life. His words are keys to be picked up and used to open large rooms of experience."

The great spiritual leaders of all ages, in their lives and work, testify to the twofold power of the Gospel. James in his letter deals thoroughly with the individual as he struggles against temptation, impatience, and doubt; but his words against economic oppression and injustice are no less pointed. "Behold, the hire of the laborers who mowed your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth out: and the cries of them that reaped have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. Ye have lived delicately on the earth, and taken your pleasure; ye have nourished your hearts in a day of slaughter. Ye have con-

demned, ye have killed the righteous one; he doth not resist you." James declares that, though men may be indifferent to and unmoved by the misery of the mistreated, God hears the cries of the oppressed.

John Bunyan is best known for his immortal allegory of the spiritual pilgrimage of the individual, but he also sees the need for the application of the Gospel principles in the wider areas of men's contacts with one another. Again and again he protests against class prejudice of his day and pleads for those who suffer from economic injustice. "Art thou a seller and do things grow cheap? Set not thy hand to help or to hold them up higher. Art thou a buyer and do things grow dear? Use no cunning or deceitful language to pull them down."

John Wesley contended that the sure hope of a better age was for a better man. Only Christ's new man could herald Christ's new world. "To Wesley," says one biographer, "a scheme to reconstruct society which ignored the redemption of the individual was unthinkable; a doctrine to save sinning men, with no aim to transform them into crusaders against social sin, was equally unthinkable." To him religion was the be-all and end-all of life, and to exclude

it from any department of human affairs was to maim and deform it. Christianity, he continually taught, is essentially a social religion; and to turn it into a solitary religion is indeed to destroy it. This command we have from Christ—that he who loves God, loves his brother also. Wesley further maintained that "all social problems are fundamentally spiritual and ethical; and persons who fail to dedicate mental equipment and material power to spiritual and ethical ends are enemies of the Kingdom of God—anti-social citizens, who needs must be restrained by human law."

The revival which bears Wesley's name first sought to lead its followers into peace with God, then into brotherhood with man. It used individual redemption as a lever to social and humanity's redemption. It is the record of history that the Evangelical Revival was the most potent factor, working through Wilberforce and others, in abolishing the slave trade and emancipating the slaves of the British Empire. And in scores of other ways the new awakening was seen in its efforts to alleviate suffering and in its attempts to improve working conditions, the prisons, and the lot of the poor. It did much toward

the spread of education; it fought uncompromisingly the liquor traffic and gambling, and sought justice for the factory and other workers. "Its ideal was to cause the spirit and ethic of Christ to permeate all departments of life. Not only the individual, the home, and the church, therefore, would it claim for the Kingdom of God; but the world of business, economics, and education; all social relationships; all national and international affairs—these, too, would it bring under the lordship of Him who, when on earth, 'went about doing good.' "

The work of the missionaries impresses upon us the fact that individual and social redemption are two sides of the same coin. William Carey went forth to win men one by one to his Saviour, but there was another side of his work. Dr. Robert E. Speer says of this humble and heroic missionary: "It is true that in social and community service, in consciously influencing the economic and intellectual life of the nation to which he had gone, in purposely affecting the forces of progress and civilization, Carey was one of the most powerful personalities of whom history has any record." This estimate is sustained as we review Carey's tireless efforts to improve the lot of

those among whom he labored. "In what manner," he asked his co-workers, "do you think the comforts of the peasantry around could be increased, their health better secured, and their general happiness promoted?" He justified his efforts in seeking to improve agricultural conditions by declaring, "Few who are extensively acquainted with human life will esteem these cares either unworthy of religion or incongruous with its highest enjoyments."

Through the centuries Christianity has to its credit many victories in addition to the individual lives reclaimed. We rejoice in the part that Christian men and women have had in the overthrow of cruel and unjust customs and in arousing public opinion on behalf of the defenseless and exploited. The recital of the part played by the followers of Christ in their heroic stand against life-destroying institutions is a thrilling story. The triumph of the Gospel over the gladiatorial shows of ancient Rome; the uplifting of womanhood; its effective plea for the rights of childhood; its victory over slavery, though long delayed; and its influence in the writing of thousands of laws on the statute books of many lands for the benefit of the oppressed—all these are but a small part of the

evidence of the achievements of men and women awakened by Christ to a new sense of brotherhood and their duty to their fellow men. "In so far as humanity has yet been redeemed, Christianity has been its redemption." It is strange indeed that some recount these accomplishments of the past as proof of the power of the Gospel in men's lives, who at the same time theoretically deny that Christians have any part in the application of our Master's teaching to the life of society. It is so much easier to see the perils of the past than to be aware of the wrongs of the present; and likewise it is easier to boast of the victories of yesterday than to have part in the struggles of today.

In the second place, we consider some difficulties in the way of Christ's twofold program in the world.

In reply to the question as to why more has not been accomplished by Christianity in overthrowing destructive forces in life, we suggest for one thing that the emphasis has been upon an individualistic and other-worldly view of the Gospel. There are many who believe that Christianity works in the inner life now and in the whole of life in the sweet by-and-by. Thus great areas of life are turned over

to other forces. Dr. Stanley Jones says that "one may define unbelief as keeping Christ out of any area of life and acting as though he were not the Son of Man." Many are unattracted by the church's program because it is so much less than the Lord's program. A crippled Christianity can produce only partial victories.

Every preacher of the Gospel of Christ must continually ask himself, how much of life does my message cover? Are there great problems left untouched and unaffected by my words? Does the Gospel we preach touch only a segment of living today, or does it encircle all of life in its demands and promises? Dare we, as ministers of Christ, be so enthusiastic about a future millennium that we are indifferent to the causes that produce misery for struggling humanity about us? If it is Christian to rescue the fallen, is it not also Christian to help remedy conditions in which vice breeds and flourishes? Professor E. C. Hayes declares that "the substitution of a mystic doctrine of the second coming for the practical purpose for which the founder of Christianity lived and died is the most pathetic of all perversions of a noble teaching."

A partial gospel eventually reacts upon the preachers of it. Many people will no longer look to them for leadership nor support the institutions they represent. Furthermore, an institution out of touch with the needs of the people will find a growing resentment against its very existence; as was true in Russia in 1917 and the years that have followed. There is much preaching today that is true as far as it goes—but it does not go far enough.

> Nothing is worth a thought beneath,
> But how I may escape the death
> That never, never dies;
> How make mine own election sure;
> And, when I fail on earth, secure
> A mansion in the skies.

This individualistic emphasis may have been satisfying to those of former generations, but it is not sufficient to fulfill the needs and aims of God's people today. How pathetic is the picture given recently of the efforts put forth by some missionaries during the terrible floods which swept over the United Provinces of India! Relief workers discovered that they were there for the purpose of distributing tracts to the flood sufferers! They asked for bread, but were

given a stone in the form of a theological pamphlet.

In 1884 in London the well-to-do man lived twice as long as the laborer; in Leeds it was forty-four years for the first, nineteen for the latter. "The length of physical life, it has been pointed out, depends largely on its economic basis. The poor are compelled to live in unsanitary and squalid surroundings; and when they die young it is not the will of God, but the will of society which prefers to cater to the greed of the few than to the need of the many." People who are followers of Him who was moved with deep compassion for those who were hungry in body as well as in soul cannot endorse the advice sometimes given to the unfortunate ones of this earth:

> Stay in your sty,
> Without a sigh,
> And you'll get pie,
> In the sky,
> By and by,
> When you die.

An extreme case, perhaps, yet too representative of the individualistic conception of religion, is that of a church leader who said not long ago that Hitler was not so bad because he neither smoked nor drank! Robert Briffault says, "We have been quick at sup-

pressing literature, slow at suppressing war; zealous in the abolition of obscene post cards; lukewarm in suppression of obscene slums; active in pulling down white slavery; apathetic in pulling down wage slavery."

The preacher of the whole Gospel will find opposition to the message from various quarters. There are many to advise him to stick to the simple Gospel, which means that the application comes too close home. A few years ago an official of a great corporation said: "In this present depression, which is above all a breakdown of character, the church . . . . should play its role in the realm of moral principles, inculcating in the people of this country what we need most for our economic as well as our moral welfare; honesty, justice, industry, bravery, co-operation, brotherly love." These are the words of the vice-president of a company which made hundreds of millions of dollars from munitions during the first world war. When a thoughtful individual hears such advice from the representatives of vested interests and the defenders of things as they are, he can appreciate the situation said to have existed in a negro church in Virginia. The new pastor held forth upon the vice of

chicken-stealing, until the deacons waited on him. The burden of their message to him was, "Dis congregation do not like sermons on chicken-stealin' an' hopes dat for de future you will keep to de gospel."

Another obstacle in the way of the twofold program of our Master is the assumption that if a man becomes a Christian he will naturally get into the right relationship with his fellow man. But it is not so simple as that. A life of personal devotion does not automatically lead to the application of the Gospel to life's needs about us. It does not follow that because a group of people are pious Christians they will go out to challenge, in the strength of their faith, the cruel injustices about them, any more than a pile of bricks will assemble themselves into a house or a town full of wells become a city water system. True progress has required more than individuals of high religious and moral character. But this assumption has delayed the coming of victories over intrenched wrong. In 1850 an American defended slavery thus: "American slavery is not only not a sin, but especially commended of God through Moses and approved of Christ through his apostles." Seven years later the following appeared in the official denominational

publication of a Baptist convention of one of our Southern states: "African slavery will remain here just as long as the people of the Southern states wish it to remain, and no earthly power can wrest it from them. And so far from Southern Baptists being afraid to trust the Almighty in this matter, I believe they will move with far greater energy in furnishing men and money for the rapid evangelization of the benighted millions of Africa." Seventy-five years later we find the defeat of the child labor amendment in a Northern state due to a church's opposition.

Another obstacle that for many centuries has been in the way of the effective application of the Gospel to all phases of life is the substitution of the means for the end, or putting the churches in the place of the Kingdom. A church too often has been an object of service rather than a means of service. It has been observed that "instead of seeking first the Kingdom of God, it has sought first its own extension, wealth, and power. Its energies are absorbed in holding meetings and raising money." But Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The mighty Kingdom ideal has found small place in the minds of the creed-makers

of Christendom, yet Jesus used the phrase "kingdom of God" sixty-four times, not counting parallel passages, and "the church" twice. Some of his followers have just about reversed the emphasis of the Master. A prophet of a former generation said: "The church substituted itself for the Kingdom of God, and thereby put the advancement of a tangible and very human organization in the place of the moral uplifting of humanity. By that substitution, the ethical plane of all our actions was subtly but terribly lowered. The Kingdom of God can never be advanced by cruelty and trickery; the power of the organized church can be and has been advanced by persecution and forgery." It magnified what a man did for his church and belittled what he did for humanity. Thus a part of life was religious and a part secular. So if one helped another who was in need he did a moral act, but if he gave to the church he did a religious act. We believe that the best life of the Kingdom is contained in the churches. But let us keep in the forefront of our thinking, as a world civilization is teetering on the precipice of disaster, that Christ is a King and he has a Kingdom, present and future, and we are his ambassadors.

We remind you in the third place of the present challenge for the full Gospel of Christ.

We need an awareness of present needs in human lives and in the wider contacts of life. Men and women are perplexed and bewildered; they need forgiveness for the burden of guilt upon their souls; they are uncertain and need confidence in a God who guides them amid all the conflicts of life. Christ's Gospel today is as truly the power of God unto salvation as when the Master called the fishermen from the Galilean sea, or halted Saul of Tarsus before Damascus' gate, or turned the riotous Augustine into the way of righteousness, or led the distressed tinker of Bedford into paths of peace. It is the glorious privilege of the preacher of Christ to minister to the deepest need of the human life—that of coming into fellowship with God. He has the message that is sufficient; and there is none other like unto it. But with this challenge of the individual's need we must not be blind to the need of proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom to a world that is tragically broken and bankrupt. Jesus' message cannot be confined to one area of human need and kept out of the other without disastrous results. Man cannot live by bread

alone—but he cannot live very long without bread. Christ is concerned for all that affects mankind for weal or woe. When Christian leaders believe this and put it into practice, then groundless will be the sneer that religion is an opiate of the people.

A few years before the outbreak of the French Revolution a fearless bishop preached before Louis XVI. The sermon was a vivid setting forth of the conditions then existing as a result of exploitation and oppression, and it concluded with a powerful plea to the monarch to give justice to a suffering people. But we are told that Louis, being one of the few present who had enjoyed a full meal, soon fell asleep, and the remainder of the sermon was accompanied by the kingly snores, quite audible to all present. How different might have been the history of France had her leaders had the eyes to see and the heart to feel the things that belonged unto her peace!

In the midst of a wrecked world it is not a pious generality, but a proven reality that Jesus of Nazareth is the hope of individuals and of nations. Recall the scene at the making of the Versailles Treaty. Clemenceau sneered at Woodrow Wilson, "He spoke like Jesus Christ"; and Gerald Heard, the English

writer, with deep insight exclaimed, "Ah, if only he had!" The years that have followed have sustained that observation. Those who go in His name today can go with the assurance of the adequacy of the Gospel for all needs and with the anticipation of opposition which has always been the lot of those who have tried to lead humanity to a better day. For "to you it hath been granted in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer in his behalf." The proclamation of the full Gospel of Christ demands and deserves the fullest devotion. May we be able to say with William Booth, "God had all there was of me."

OUR RELIGION: A FORM OR A FORCE?

> Though they keep up a form of religion, they will have nothing to do with it as a force.—II Timothy 3:5 (Moffatt).

THROUGH THE AGES TRUE RELIGION has had to contend with false religion. Sincere faith has ever been opposed by a sham belief. The religion of reality has had to face the claims of those who relied on their profession and outward connection with religion. There have always been those who were satisfied with a religion of form; but there have always been some who have found in their faith an unfailing source of power. The conflict between those who emphasize the inwardness of faith and those who stress the externals of religion is not new. The great spiritual seers of the Hebrews were continually calling the people back to the essential nature of religion. They insisted yet again and again that ritual and ceremonies must never usurp first place in their lives. In answer to the anxious inquiry of the people as to

how they are to approach Jehovah, "Will Jehovah be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil?" the prophet replies, "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

Another prophet declared: "Thus saith Jehovah of hosts . . . .: Add your burnt-offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat ye flesh. For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices: but this thing I commanded them, saying, Hearken unto my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people." And still another prophet, in emphasizing the inwardness of religion, said, "I desire goodness, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings." The words of the psalmist are familiar to all students of Scripture: "Thou delightest not in sacrifice; else would I give it: . . . . The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." It has been accurately observed that the Jews were pre-eminently a religious people; and this is always one peril of religious people

—to take the things that lead to God and let the heart grow centered upon them.

Jesus on many occasions pointed out the futility and the tragedy of a religion which was absorbed in form and ritual and neglected the essential demands of faith. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye tithe mint and anise and cummin, and have left undone the weightier matters of the law, justice, and mercy, and faith: but these ye ought to have done, and not to have left the other undone. Ye blind guides, that strain out the gnat, and swallow the camel!"

It is much easier to subscribe to a creed, perform certain religious duties, than to live out in our lives the truths that God has given us in Christ. It is much easier to defend the theology of one's denomination, glory in its tradition and shout its battle cries than it is to take up one's cross and follow Christ and share with others the unsearchable riches of the Kingdom of God. There are those, says the Apostle, who "keep up a form of religion, but will have nothing to do with it as a force." That is the easier way, but it is not the Master's way; and the end thereof is not victory, but defeat. It may be the way of church

membership, but it is not the way of Christian discipleship.

The Christian religion is a religion of power. To each individual who will accept its terms it offers unfailing resources for spiritual strength and inner stability. It is significant that the word translated power and used of Jesus and his message occurs about twenty-five times in the first three Gospels. For truly the Christian message is the most powerful force for the individual and society that has ever been presented to mankind.

In the first place, as we have said, there are many who are content with a religion of form. To them religion is a matter of external performances and membership in a religious organization. They have, consciously or unconsciously, sought to substitute an outward connection with a church for an inner union with Christ. Dr. Alexander McLaren says:

> Wherever any great cause or principle is first launched into the world, it evokes earnest enthusiasm and brings men to heroisms of consecration and service. And so when Christianity was first launched, there was much less likelihood of its attracting to itself men who were not in earnest, and who were formalists. . . . . As the years go on, and primitive enthusiasms die out, and the cause which was once all

freshly radiant and manifestly heaven-born becomes an earthly institution, there is a growing tendency to gather around it superficial, half-and-half adherents. . . . . And the gospel has had its full share of such.

The mighty conquests and deathless loyalty of the early Christians are a well-known epic. For three hundred years Christianity was a vital, far-reaching, and revolutionary force—turning the world of values upside down. Its followers were undefeated by opposition, undaunted by persecution, undismayed by misrepresentation and slander, and unwavering in their devotion to their Leader. Then came the alliance with the state, with the emperor a professed believer. The cross became the rallying sign for the armies of the empire. "Religion, instead of leading to the lions and the stake, won for a man the favor of the authorities and led to swift promotion." Immediately the ranks of Christianity were swelled with recruits, many of whom were insincere and bent only on their own security and advancement. Religion compromised with the world and fell into contempt. Then followed the long centuries known as the dark ages, when religion was for the most part stagnant and devitalized.

OUR RELIGION: A FORM OR A FORCE?

Today one is impressed with the power of the external to influence our thinking about religion. Statistics of members, church buildings, budgets, and attendance are brought forward to prove that our faith is making progress. These things ofttimes are an index to the true condition; yet the mistake is to put the wrong emphasis upon them and to draw false conclusions from them. These things in themselves are not religion. Destroy the churches, the creeds, and the ceremonies and you have not touched the heart of faith. The progress of true religion is a matter of development of the moral and spiritual life, of becoming more like the Christ we worship, and of sharing with others the Good News and the transforming power of his Kingdom.

In these modern times, as well as in the apostolic age, many have a religion of form but not of power. To put it bluntly, there are masses of pagans who are masquerading as Christians. Many desire to appear loyal to their faith, but are unwilling to pay the price and make the sacrifices that are essential to a character of poise and power. There are those who think that by engaging in some form of Christian

activity they can atone for the moral breakdown and the spiritual bankruptcy of their lives.

The consequences of holding to the externals of religion, but not receiving its power, are painfully evident all about us. We find a great host today claiming membership in the church, but who are indifferent to the challenge of the Gospel, unmoved by the deepest needs about them, and who make no serious effort to conform their lives to Christian standards. They are at once both the problem and the peril of the Christian faith today. They are like the icebergs that float in the Atlantic and lower the temperature of much of Europe. They would make devotion "peculiar" and out-and-out Christian living "odd" or "old-fashioned." Two traitors within a besieged city may do more harm than two thousand warriors without. How tragically easy it is for one to deceive himself into believing that outward conformity is pleasing to God. It is said that John Newton, who became England's sweet singer and powerful preacher of the Gospel, was at one period of his life content with external performance of religious duties. And we have the picture of him on board his slave ship on the Sabbath Day reading the pre-

scribed religious service for the day while the poor, enchained, and wretched slaves groaned in their miserable condition in the steerage. Newton had not learned then, as he did later, that religion is not merely a form to be followed, but a power to be appropriated and a Person to be obeyed.

It is quite evident that a religion that goes no further than the outward cannot stand the strain that sooner or later will be put upon it. We live under pressure and will be crushed unless there is a stronger force within to resist the attacks from without. Multitudes are living hectic and anxious lives because their inner resources are inadequate. Someone recently put forth the thesis that the great battle of today is not between religion and atheism, but between good religion and bad religion. The issue is between a religion of form and a religion of power. We must remember that it was not the atheists who crucified our Master, but the religious leaders who clamored for his death. And through the centuries many wrongs have been committed in the name of religion—even the Christian religion. The Apostle warned against those within organized Christianity

who "crucify . . . . the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."

While Dr. Henry Hitt Crane was in Siam recently a Buddhist priest said to him: "Tell me how it is that the so-called Christian nations have almost always been the most successful warriors, have killed more people, stolen more territory and exploited more areas by violence than all other nations where other religions hold sway? As I read your Bible it seems as though your Leader explicitly forbade the very things you are most expert in." This American minister says further:

The one spot that stands out in my mind as the vilest center of unashamed depravity is the place called Macao, a three-hour boat ride from Hongkong. Prostitution, gambling, opium smoking, and numerous practices pandering to man's worst self are not only permitted, they are assiduously promoted—and by a so-called Christian nation, Portugal, which nation nets the neat little sum of $8,000,000 a year from the abominable business. China would long ago have kicked the wicked traffickers into the sea, but other Western "Christian" nations will not allow her to do so, lest it "lower the prestige of the white man." Imagine! The first sight one sees when approaching the place is a white "Christian" church on the topmost hill, bearing on the steeple a high

gold cross. Instead of damning the traffic in human souls, it derives its income from the business.[1]

In an age when the world seems to be headed for disaster the best hope is for genuine Christianity to be applied to all our needs, both of the individual and of civilization. But if we are chiefly concerned with the comparatively unimportant; if we are engrossed in the less essential; if we are concerned for the maintenance of our own organization more than we are for the furtherance of the Gospel of power among men, we shall have little part in the victory of righteousness over the evils in our day. God forbid that we should be like the tree with plenty of leaves but no fruit, so that we too shall have to hear the Master say in disappointment as he seeks fruit from us, "Let there be no fruit from thee henceforward for ever."

In the second place, there are many who possess a religion of power. They are "like a tree planted by the streams of water, that bringeth forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also doth not wither." Paul, in writing to a group of Christians, reminded them "how that our gospel came not unto you in word

[1] *The Christian Century Pulpit,* March, 1938. Used by permission.

only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance." And later on he speaks out of his own experience as to the power of faith to give strength and renewal within. "Wherefore," said he, "we faint not; but though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day." One who can bring in such testimony as this must have a first-hand contact with God. An inherited religion, a second-hand faith, a borrowed creed will never bring peace to our hearts or strength to our souls.

We must place ourselves in the position where we can receive spiritual re-enforcements. We cannot have a strong character just by wishing for it, but we must be in the right relationship with God so that we can make use of all the resources which he has provided for us. The promise to those who wait upon the Lord is that they do not wait in vain. "He giveth power to the faith; and to him that hath no might he increaseth strength. . . . . They that wait for Jehovah shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint."

Henry Stanley, who spent perilous and heroic days

in search for Livingstone in Africa, has left many interesting items in his notebook, but none more significant than the explorer's attitude toward prayer.

> On all my expeditions, prayer made me stronger, morally and mentally, than my non-praying companions. It did not blind my eyes, or dull my mind, or close my ears; but on the contrary, it gave me confidence. It did more; it gave me joy and pride in my work, and lifted me hopefully over the one thousand five hundred miles of forest tracks, eager to face the day's perils and fatigues. . . . . By prayer, the road sought for has become visible, and the danger immediately lessened, not once or twice or thrice, but repeatedly, until the cold unbelieving heart was impressed. . . . . Civilized society rejoices in the protection afforded it by strong-armed law. Those in whom faith in God is strong feel the same sense of security in the deepest wilds. An invisible Good Influence surrounds them, to whom they appeal in distress, an Influence which inspires noble thoughts, comfort in grief, and resolution when weakened by misfortune. I imperfectly understand this myself, but I have faith and believe.[2]

Another out of a life of devotion has given this helpful description of communion with God: "Prayer draws a great God down into a little heart; it raises the hungry soul to God who holds all things."

The need of inner resources is seen in our relation-

[2] From *The Autobiography of Henry M. Stanley*. Used by permission of Houghton Mifflin Co.

ships and attitudes toward others. Beneath the externals in religion that separate people into groups there is the undercurrent of appreciation of the generous spirit and the feeling of kinship with others who are called by different names. The religion of form has tended to separate people, but a religion of power unites. We are all impressed when we read of the rigid Catholic King Louis IX of France filling his rooms with poor people every Wednesday and Friday and ministering to them with his own hands. This same king, during his crusade, sent this word to the Saracens: "Say on my part to the king your master that I desire so greatly the salvation of his soul that I would stop in the prisons of the Saracens all my life, and never again see the sunlight, if your king and his people would become Christians in reality." We are becoming conscious of the fact that there is much more to religion than correctness of doctrine. And the test should be not only what creed one subscribes to, but how genuine a love does he have; what of his patience, his sympathy, or his willingness to suffer and to serve?

In our own personal struggle with suffering and

disappointment we know our need of inner resources to enable us to go on and not go down. Surely the noblest pages of history and biography are those that tell of the triumph of men and women over ill-health, adverse conditions, and opposition.

Henri Amiel, professor in the Academy of Geneva, was told by his physician that he had an incurable affliction which would mean his death after some months or possibly years. The next day he wrote in his diary: "It is difficult for the natural man to escape from a dumb rage against inevitable agony. . . . . Health cut off means marriage, travel, study, and work forbidden or endangered. It means life reduced in attractiveness and utility by five sixths. . . . . Thy will be done." But let no one think that a man can meet sorrow and loss so nobly just by willing to do so. He must possess within the springs of inspiration, the hope that looks for the dawn to follow the darkest night, and faith in the leading of a wise and gracious God. It is true that faith in God will not save us from troubles, but it will save us through them.

As we look within our own hearts and know their

needs, as we seek with others to have a part in answering the call of our own generation, may we have a faith not of form, but of force, and be able to say with one of old, "I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me."

THE HOPE OF A NATION

Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people.—Proverbs 14:34.

RELIGION AND ONE'S NATIVE LAND have always been closely related. People in whose hearts has burned the strongest faith in God have had a deep love for their homeland. An illustration of this is seen in the attitude of the ancient Hebrews who were carried captive to a strange country, but who could not blot out the memories of and attachment for their own land.

By the rivers of Babylon,
There we sat down, yea, we wept,
When we remembered Zion.
Upon the willows in the midst thereof
We hanged up our harps.
For there they that led us captive required of us songs,
And they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying,
Sing us one of the songs of Zion.
How shall we sing Jehovah's song
In a foreign land?
If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,
Let my right hand forget her skill.

Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth,
If I remember thee not;
If I prefer not Jerusalem
Above my chief joy.

We should not be surprised when we discover that the great saints of the Old Testament were national figures. Their words contained direction for the individual life; but again and again their messages were directed to the people as a nation. Someone has observed that to the leaders of ancient Israel "any political question was also a religious question."

We cannot review correctly the history of our own land apart from the religious faith of our people. Christianity, which has been our country's predominating religion, is not only concerned about a life beyond, but is vitally interested in the life that now is. Christians ought not only to look forward to dwelling in Beulah Land, but also to assume responsibility for making a better native land. The genuine Christian faith purifies and ennobles one's love for country and encourages a true patriotism, preventing it from degenerating into a narrow and selfish nationalism. Sir Walter Scott, in his well-known lines, sings of the deep affection for one's own country.

Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
  This is my own, my native land!
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burned,
As home his footsteps he hath turned,
  From wandering on a foreign strand!
If such there breathe, go, mark him well;
For him no Minstrel raptures swell;
High though his titles, proud his name,
Boundless his wealth as wish can claim;
Despite those titles, power, and pelf,
The wretch, concentered all in self,
Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
And, doubly dying, shall go down
To the vile dust, from whence he sprung,
Unwept, unhonoured, and unsung.

Let us, with love in our hearts for the country of our birth, affection for her ideals, and deep concern for her welfare, consider the subject "The Hope of a Nation" in the light of a statement of scripture—"Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people." This is an ancient word, but it has a message for modern times. It needs to be re-examined carefully as we think of our own nation—past, present, and future. The term righteousness is an inclusive one, meaning all just principles and actions; and when these are incorporated in a people's charac-

ter and civilization there is a general elevation and advancement in the condition of that people. But when the moral foundations of a nation crumble there is disaster.

In the first place, a study of our past will reveal the basis of our nation's hope. America has had a unique place among the nations of the earth. Surely the historian was fortunate in the selection of a title for his book when he called it *The Hand of God in American History*. As we review her humble and seemingly insignificant beginning we may truly say this too is Immanuel's land, for God has been with us. We need frequently to remember the conditions existing in the world at the time of our nation's birth. Europe was permeated with the spirit of intolerance; classes were in bondage to classes; political and religious freedom were little more than hazy dreams. But out of the old world came a people to these shores moved by the deep desire for religious liberty, seeking the privilege of worshiping God according to the dictates of their own consciences. The ideals that shaped the destiny of our country were the offspring of religious faith. The founders of our republic were neither lawless nor unbelieving. They had faith and

were not ashamed of it. In the Declaration of Independence there is proof of their belief, for coming generations to see. In that first great crisis they wrote "with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence."

The past should not enchain us, but should inspire us. We are not primarily concerned with the methods used by our forefathers, but we are intensely interested in the motives that moved them to endure and to achieve. We cannot maintain our self-respect and take lightly a heritage which others have purchased at so great a cost. "If you lose what I have won," cried the old Prussian Frederick William to his son, "I'll laugh at you out of my grave."

As we look back over the past we are impressed that America has attained greatness in proportion to the ideals and character of her people. Natural resources and forms of government are important, but alone they do not guarantee a great nation. Back of economic and social programs we need to look for the first cause, the God of the nations. When the Spanish Armada was almost ready to crush England, a terrific storm smashed both the ships and the hopes of Spain. Later Queen Elizabeth had medals struck

with this inscription upon them, "God blew with his winds and they were scattered." Our deep need is to see God beyond the secondary forces of life and to appreciate the fact that the lives built on faith in him have made the greatest contribution to our national life. Can we really believe that God is our hope and that righteousness exalteth a nation, or must we trust in communism, which is faith in material values as ends in themselves? We who read our nation's history cannot be in the dark as to the answer.

Again, present needs challenge us to help make our nation's hope brighter. It is not enough merely to review the past; we must face the present. Today presents its own peculiar difficulties, almost bewildering problems, both for individuals and for the nations. The fact that this is true, however, constitutes a challenge to every thoughtful person in this generation. The noblest elements of character are called forth and developed in the face of the most dangerous and difficult tasks.

The present outlook is not encouraging. We need to face the unpleasant truth that our nation today is in a critical condition. A refusal to seriously consider problems confronting us shows neither wisdom

nor courage. It seems that our nation is making progress in the material realm, but the moral progress of our people is not so evident. To every discerning eye certain tendencies are apparent in our country now which, if not halted, will leave destitution and misery in their wake. There are open sores today on the body of our beloved nation, and so long as they continue unhealed they are a menace to the health of our country. Fosdick says, "Our Western civilization has broken all laws of social health, transgressed the principles of a civilized society; and the fact that in consequence we are now in trouble does not indicate that the world is crazy, but, rather, that the foundations of the world are laid in moral law, so that whatsoever a civilization soweth that shall it also reap." Anyone who calmly reflects upon our situation today will not scorn as out of date the principle enshrined in the ancient proverb, "Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people."

The first great contribution we can make toward improved conditions in our land is to realize and assume individual responsibility as citizens. We each have duties to perform which we cannot evade and still be good citizens. Flag-waving and patriotic

speeches on special days are a poor substitute for active and informed interest, daily, in the affairs of our country. There are surely as many reasons why we should be courageous at the ballot box as on the field of battle. A young woman recently said to a friend: "This world crisis has waked me up. I never before had thought or read about public affairs. I never even bothered about how I voted. But now I see that we are all sunk unless we all think." Has there ever been a time when the need was more acute than it is today for men and women who have convictions on personal living and public duty?

This shirking of duty has brought disaster to us in many ways. One of the most serious problems confronting our nation today is the breakdown of confidence on the part of our people in the integrity of our leaders and in the sacredness of law and justice. We have again and again been betrayed by weak, stupid, and selfish officeholders. And yet have we not brought it upon ourselves by our indifference toward the vitally important public affairs and the men and women for whom we vote? What a different situation we might find ourselves in today if we had stood bravely for the things we believe to be right

and demanded the same in all who would lead in the conduct of public affairs! We hear much denunciation of communism, fascism, and other isms on the part of speakers and writers. They point out the grave dangers which lurk in them. But may we remind you that the best defense against any and all hurtful forces to our country's welfare is an honest and intelligent leadership supported by an informed and courageous citizenship. Surely the challenge is for every patriotic group and organization in our land to work toward that achievement. If we will all strive toward this end, our affairs of state may be someday in the hands of statesmen rather than politicians. The difference between them, someone has reminded us, is that a politician is one who will give in before he will suffer, while a statesman will suffer before he will give in. Would that we could write indelibly upon our memories the words of Edmund Burke: "Whatever is morally wrong cannot be politically right."

We must face today another dark blot upon the page of our national life—that of crime. What would those immortal fifty-six signers of the Declaration of Independence say if they could come back

and view the nation which they helped to bring into existence, ranking as the most lawless and crime-ridden in all the world? There are many reasons why we pay an awful toll for the criminal element in this country. When money can buy protection for vice, so long will lawlessness flourish. Many of our great cities are in the hands of gangsters not because there are more of that class than there are good men, but because the former class are active in building up an underworld empire and the latter class are for the most part standing passively by. Do we wonder that places of vice are wide open and flauntingly offer their wares for public consumption? But let us bear in mind that criminals begin young and that we need, more than the enforcement of law, the right influence and training in home, school, church, and every worthy group of the community.

As we try to face our problem today we cannot overlook another menace which in recent years has grown to alarming proportions. It is not an exaggeration to say that our nation is rapidly becoming a nation of gamblers. What a challenge is this condition to every man and woman who is interested in the welfare of his country! No thoughtful person can view

lightly this widespread evil of gambling. Its own record condemns it utterly. We quote from an editorial which appeared recently in one of our great daily newspapers:

Gambling is the vainest, most deceptive, most treacherous and most demoralizing of all mankind's efforts to get money. It curses him that gives and him that takes, or him that loses and him that wins. Have you ever seen anybody that profited in the long run by risking his money in any form of gambling? It doesn't need moralists to denounce its ways and deplore its heavy toll of victims. It indicts itself. It is continually forced to exhibit its victims to public view. But it does not cease to claim victims in unending number, for it is brazen and without remorse.

This land of America, which has always preserved the best virtues of the Anglo-Saxon race, has been swept by an epidemic of gambling. It has invoked machinery to do its work, from the "one-armed bandit" of the slot device to the greedy glutton of the pari-mutuel. The inquiry that all may tremble to explore is whether this surge of gambling, which has rewritten the statutes of many states and somehow stayed the hand of the law in many cities, is to be a permanent condition or is finally to convict itself and bring its own undoing. If the tide is not turned we shall be in imminent danger of the moral odium and financial devastation of a national lottery established by act of Congress.

Are our children growing up with easy attitude toward gambling, or with vivid and burning realization of its insidious evils? That is the question for parents and teachers.

Courageous citizens who believe that "righteousness exalteth a nation" will face yet another problem. From colonial days in America, as well as from the dawn of human history, liquor has been a major problem. The liquor interests have been one of the demoralizing influences in our national life. They have been the source and partner of political corruption, as well as individual degradation, from the time of the Whisky Rebellion in Pennsylvania in 1794 to the buying of lawmakers today. And in addition come the terrible grim facts from the National Safety Council of the rapidly mounting toll of automobile fatalities by reason of drunken drivers and drunken pedestrians.

Be not deceived. The liquor problem is not solved today. It is very far from an adequate solution. Laws and their enforcement must help but the right attitude is essential. We can all have a share in helping to solve the old problem by building in the character of our boys and girls the right attitude toward this enemy of the race.

As we of this generation think seriously about the forces now working powerfully in civilization we cannot overlook the question of war. There are several

things which will help us to see this mighty monster in a truer light. First of all we need to distinguish between a nationalism which has been called "man's other religion" and true patriotism. The fact that we love our own country better than any other ought to enable us to appreciate the affection that other people have for their native lands.

> He serves his country best
> Who lives pure life and doeth righteous deed,
> And walks straight paths however others stray,
> And leaves his sons, as uttermost bequest,
> A stainless record which all men may read;
> This is the better way.
>
> No drop but serves the slowly lifting tide;
> No dew but has an errand to some flower;
> No smallest star but sheds some helpful ray,
> And man by man, each helping all the rest,
> Make the firm bulwark of the country's power;
> There is no better way.[1]

We need to insist on a correct appraisal of war. There are still many efforts to glorify war, but it grows harder and harder to deceive thinking people as to its true nature. More than a hundred and fifty

[1] "Patriotism," by Susan Coolidge. Used by permission of Little, Brown & Co.

years ago Edward Gibbon wrote, "As long as mankind shall continue to bestow more liberal applause on their destroyers than on their benefactors, the thirst of military glory will ever be the vice of the most exalted characters." And that great American and Christian gentleman, Robert E. Lee, is quoted by Dr. Douglas Freeman as saying that the greatest mistake he ever made was when he decided to make the military profession his life's work. These words from such an authority on war must make us pause. Progress will be made toward peace when our history books are rewritten and the glorifying of war is eliminated and the whole subject presented in its true light. "Men have yet to learn that that which is wrong in the individual is wrong in the society. Nations make war on one another for reasons which would never justify individual men in fighting a duel. Yet, if it is wrong for a man to steal a field, it must be wrong for a nation to steal a province; and if an individual man may not cut his neighbor's throat out of revenge without being punished as a criminal, there is nothing to justify a whole community in shooting down thousands of people for no better motive. If

selfishness ever is sinful in one man, selfishness cannot be virtuous in thirty millions of people."

These problems in our national life which we have mentioned—crime, gambling, liquor, and war—are mighty ones and will not be solved in a day. By united and persistent effort on the part of all who believe that righteousness exalteth a nation, we can make headway against them.

In the third place, as we think of the hope of our nation we need to hear the call of the future. Can we make that hope bright for those who come after us? Richter has said that "only the thought of the future makes men great." We cannot afford to be deaf to the plea of the future that we shall pass on the heritage which we have received from others. We may have a part in building a safe highway over which shall walk the feet of children yet unborn. The opposite attitude is expressed in the words of Louis XV, "After us, the deluge."

A people may well believe in their country's future when they are true to the fundamental principles of life. We must not allow ourselves to be lulled into a false security that believes that regardless of how we live we shall endure as a nation. Have we forgotten

the achievements and the glory that belonged to Egypt and to Babylon? to Rome and to Greece? These nations at the zenith of their power doubtless felt that they would remain invincible; but long since they crashed like a once-proud tree because of decay within. As we think of our nation's hope may we hear the voice of the past as it speaks to us and claims us; of the present as it challenges us; and of the future as it calls us on. For "righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people."

EVERY MAN A DEBTOR

> I am debtor both to Greeks and to Barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you also that are in Rome.—Romans 1:14, 15.

WE ARE ALL IN DEBT and our obligations are great. We are thinking not of financial indebtedness, which may be settled with money. There are larger debts than these, and the payment of mere money cannot liquidate them. A vast multitude of people, known and unknown, past and present, have made contributions to our lives. Countless privileges are ours today because of the heroism and sacrifice of others. We live in a brighter world because of the men and women who had visions of a better day and the courage to translate their visions into realities.

Men of integrity will not treat lightly their obligations to others. Honest men and women do not repudiate their debts. The fact that one cannot meet in full his debt to others and to God is no reason for him to ignore that obligation. He can at least admit

his indebtedness and do his best to repay. It is true that at best we can pay back only a tiny part of life's great obligations. He who will not accept this responsibility is devoid of gratitude and will become a parasite, demanding to receive but refusing to give anything in return.

Paul recognized the fact that he had many creditors. "I am debtor both to Greeks and to Barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish." He used the Greek classification of people. There were a few cultured nations; the others were known as Barbarians, and there were many nations in this class. Here then is a man who admits his indebtedness and eagerly sets himself to repay it. As Paul meditated upon what God had done for him, he felt that all men, regardless of race or class, were his creditors. It is this sense of responsibility that gives worth to the individual life and is the redeeming quality in society. There need be little doubt as to the outcome of lives that adopt as their philosophy, "The world owes me a living," nor of those individuals who believe that "I owe the world a life." Dr. Stanley Jones tells us that the Chinese have a saying, "It is not on my body," meaning that they are not responsible.

A foreign lady saw an irate mother-in-law dragging her young daughter-in-law to the brink of the river to throw her in. She appealed to the watching crowd to save the girl, but they turned to her in surprise and said, "It is not on my body." It is this lack of the sense of corporate responsibility that is laying its destroying hand upon China. I was in a city the streets of which were unspeakably filthy. A Chinese gentleman told me that the encyclopedia said that this city was the dirtiest city in the world. I turned to this Chinese friend and said to him, "I don't understand this; these shops and stores are beautifully clean, the Chinese gentlemen in them dressed in silk, but these narrow streets are unspeakably dirty."

"It is easy to understand," he replied, "for the shops and stores belong to these men, but the streets don't belong to anybody." So they all wallowed in corporate filth because of a lack of corporate responsibility. To say, "It is not on my body," turned out to mean that the results of it were on everybody's body.[1]

As we think upon the subject "Every Man a Debtor," let us ask, in the first place, why are we debtors?

We are debtors because of the benefits which we have received. All through our earthly life, from the cradle to the grave, we are recipients of helpful deeds and gifts which enrich our lives. Every act of kind-

[1] *Christ and Human Suffering,* pp. 182-83. Used by permission of Abingdon-Cokesbury Press.

ness which one receives, from the helplessness of infancy down to the decrepitude of old age, makes him debtor to many. Beyond those things which were done for our individual good, we share in the common blessings in the material, social, and spiritual realms. All that we have received cost somebody something; and in many cases the cost was heavy indeed. We have read the statement that a pound of honey may mean forty thousand miles of flying on the part of the bees. As we enjoy the fruit of their toil we may think little of what it cost us; but think of what it cost the bees! Every step of progress has been made in the face of ridicule and ofttimes with heroic sacrifice and suffering. The footprints of the pioneers, in those causes which have made for the betterment of the race, have usually been marked with blood.

The earth was in the raw when the human race began. And slow and painful has been the process of turning the raw material into usable and beneficial products. Adam is not the only one who, as he toiled, felt the sweat upon his brow; but all the sons of Adam who have had part in making the world a more livable place have felt too the sweat upon their faces.

EVERY MAN A DEBTOR

The average person today is benefited by thousands of material comforts and conveniences. It has been said that the man of moderate income, in this scientific age, can live upon a higher material plane than did the kings of a few generations ago. The tendency is to take material progress for granted and to forget that those who patiently labored upon inventions and discoveries too often received little or no returns for their achievements. Many of them suffered persecution at the hands of their fellow men. Even in the lowest realm—the material—we are debtors to those who have labored, for we have entered into their labors. Deep should be our gratitude to those of our own generation who are seeking to make possible decent and sanitary homes for the poor in city and country; those who strive for wholesome conditions under which men and women must labor and who are seeking to remove from our beloved land the curse of that life-maiming and destroying institution, child labor.

How can we fail to realize our obligation to those heroic men who have grappled with the diseases which cripple and destroy humanity? Again and again at the risk of their own lives have they sought

the cause and cure of the ills to which the flesh is heir. We are debtors to men like Louis Pasteur who, ill in body, ceased not to labor for the alleviation of human suffering; men like Walter Reed and his courageous comrades in their grim fight with yellow fever; and Dr. Banning, who with sacrificial and untiring labor made the discovery of the insulin treatment of diabetes. But time would fail us should we attempt to recount the struggles of many others who wrought as nobly as these. By their achievements which have blessed our lives, we are placed under heavy obligations to them.

We should not forget those dauntless men and women who have given their lives in the war against the enemies of the moral life of the race. Powerful and evil customs and institutions, born of greed and prejudice, have cast a dark shadow over civilization. From the beginning of history there have been wrongs to be righted and hurts to be healed, for the race has never lived amid ideal conditions. Are we not deeply indebted to men like Wilberforce, who faced ridicule and slander that he might help to strike off the shackles that held human beings in slavery? His life and work for unfortunate humanity against intrenched

wrong might well stand as a fair sample of the heroism demanded in the age-old struggles against those influences which blight and destroy the lives of men and women. Think of the tremendous problem to which this man, a hunchback, dedicated his powers! During the eighteenth century the British slave interests transported nearly a million blacks from Africa to Jamaica alone. Year after year Wilberforce continued his efforts on behalf of those in bondage. He was branded on the floor of the British Parliament as a public nuisance. For fifty years he never ceased his protest against "this odious traffic in human flesh." Wilberforce was dying before the Emancipation Bill had passed and the slaves were freed. "Thank God," exclaimed the dying man, "I have lived to see this day."

The realm in which the Christian is the greatest debtor is the spiritual. Mighty is the heritage of those who fear Jehovah. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For ye received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear; but ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God: and if

children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."

Consider the direct gifts from God to the Christian's life. We believe that because of the great love with which he has loved us we may enter into life abundant and eternal. We believe that we may receive a new quality of life through faith, that will enable us to live victoriously in this earthly life and look forward in hope to endless fellowship with our Saviour and the redeemed of all the ages. "Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is."

God speaks peace to the guilty of soul, for he pardoneth iniquity; he gives hope to the discouraged and strength and inspiration for the monotonous tasks of life. And when sorrows come he gives grace that is sufficient for every bitter experience through which we are called to pass. It must have been some such thoughts as these upon which Charles Wesley was meditating when he wrote:

O for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer's praise,

The glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of his grace!

Jesus! the Name that charms our fears,
That bids our sorrows cease,
'Tis music in the sinner's ears,
'Tis life, and health, and peace.

Now it is very evident that many of God's choicest gifts come to us indirectly; that is, he sends them through others. We are therefore deeply indebted to many people of various faiths for inspiring ideals, noble examples, and enduring achievements. It will be profitable for us to consider how much we owe to groups other than our own denomination. For many generations differences have been emphasized. How helpful it would be if we could stress the ways in which we have been blessed by those whose religious beliefs differ from ours. We are not suggesting that anyone should compromise his convictions, but we do believe that the time is at hand when we should declare a moratorium on hostile criticism of other groups and be done forever with bigotry and intolerance. It is altogether possible—even as in the case of John the disciple—to be so enthusiastic about the good work of your own group that you do not appreciate the

worthy efforts of others in God's wide harvest field. "John said unto him, Teacher, we saw one casting out demons in thy name; and we forbade him, because he followed not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man who shall do a mighty work in my name, and be able quickly to speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is for us."

Dr. Harold C. Phillips says:

> The tolerant man is he who discovers or admits that neither he nor the group he represents has a monopoly on the truth. We cannot copyright truth. Truth is like the sun. It gives one light, but that light can be broken up into many colors. Truth is like a garden. It is beauty, but there are different flowers which reflect differing aspects of that beauty. The sectarian always likes to think that the whole sea is limited to his private beach. To borrow the figure of another, he acts as if the road to the Holy City were a one-way street, and that God had appointed him the sole traffic policeman.

Have we ever paused to enumerate some of the good things which have come to us through men and women affiliated with religious organizations differing in many ways, perhaps, from our own? We are deeply indebted to Augustine for his books which have lived for fifteen hundred years. Especially help-

ful to all Christians is that epic of the soul, *The Confessions*. Have we forgotten the debt we owe to Thomas à Kempis for providing Christians with that most widely appreciated book of devotions which has ever been written, *The Imitation of Christ?* Can anyone deny that that beautiful character, Francis of Assisi, brought new ideals and hopes to millions of hearts? Are we not grateful to Bernard of Clairvaux for giving to the world the immortal hymn:

> Jesus, the very thought of thee
> With sweetness fills the breast;
> But sweeter far thy face to see,
> And in thy presence rest.

To these and many others in the Catholic church we can gladly acknowledge our indebtedness.

In the average minister's library probably the majority of the books upon the shelves were written by representatives of other denominations than his own. Should he part with these he would be poor indeed! It is in the realm of music, however, that Christians more universally realize how much they have received from other groups. The hymnbook is the common meeting ground of people of all faiths. Do we not all appreciate the Methodist hymn:

Jesus, Lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly,
While the nearer waters roll,
While the tempest still is high.

Who would cast his vote to cease singing the beloved hymn of the Congregationalist Watts:

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Are we not all inspired by hearing the Episcopalian hymn:

Amazing grace! how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me!

or that beloved hymn written by a Unitarian, "Nearer, my God, to thee"; or the Presbyterian,

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"Come unto me and rest";

or the hymn composed by the Baptist John Fawcett, "Blest be the tie that binds"?

We are then indebted to all who have provided us

with appropriate praises with which to worship God.

Every Christian is a debtor because of what he has received in the material, social, and spiritual realms of life, for truly is each one "the heir of all the ages in the foremost files of time."

Again, in considering the subject "Every Man a Debtor," let us ask the question, how can we repay our debt? Paul said, "I am debtor . . . ."; but he hastened to add, "as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you also that are in Rome." Upon realizing our great indebtedness to God and man we may begin to repay it by what we are and what we do. We need not be reminded that we can never wholly repay the debt we owe; but, like Paul, we can say, "As much as in me is, I am ready."

A tourist tells how, in the heart of Africa, he came across a college friend working as a missionary—and the last man he had expected to see. "What are you doing here?" he asked. "I came to pay my debt," was the calm reply. He knew that he had received much and that the benighted natives needed much.

The race is divided into two groups: those who acknowledge and try to pay their indebtedness, and those who refuse to do either. One spirit builds

brotherhood among men; the other ultimately brings injustice and suffering. These two attitudes are revealed in our relations with other nations, especially the weaker nations. Some have gone forth from our country with the sole aim of exploitation—to get as much as they can and to give in return as little as they can. But others, noble young men and women, have gone out from our shores for the purpose of giving the best to those who do not have the blessings which the kingdom of God brings to men. This is the motive power of missions: "I am debtor both to Greeks and to Barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you also that are in Rome."

Dr. E. C. Cort, a medical missionary to Siam and head of a great hospital there, was for several years the physician to the royal family. While in this country on one occasion, the skillful surgeon and great Christian said to his friend Dr. A. L. Wilson, "One of the most Christlike men I have ever known in my life was the late crown prince of Siam, brother of the king of Siam who recently resigned, and father of the twelve-year-old boy who will be crowned king of Siam next month." The reason for the doctor's

high opinion of the prince was well founded. He was born in the royal palace and was a multimillionaire. He surprised his family and friends by announcing his intention of studying medicine, believing that in this way he could be of greatest service to his people. This had never been done before by the royalty of the land, and it seemed an amazing thing that he who was reared in the atmosphere of a palace should go out and minister to the diseased and suffering. After graduating from the Harvard Medical School he went back to dedicate his life to his people. His father, the king, offered him $250,000 with which to build a palace, but he replied: "I don't want a palace. I would much rather you would take the money and build a wing to the hospital." The king did as his son requested. And though this useful life was cut short at thirty-three years of age, the influence of his unselfish character lives on.

We are debtors because of the benefits which we have received. Let us acknowledge our obligations and do our best to pay. May we say with Paul, "As much as in me is, I am ready."

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BEHOLD THE DREAMER

> Behold, this dreamer cometh. Come now therefore, and let us slay him . . . . and we shall see what will become of his dreams.—Genesis 37:19-20.

THE MAN OF VISION USUALLY meets with contempt and scorn. The dreamer is considered visionary, impractical, and ineffective in the real business of living. Such a man finds that people mistrust him and consider him unreliable. They do not understand him, nor do they have the desire to listen to him as he tells of the thoughts that have surged through heart and brain.

Joseph and his dreams were distinctly distasteful to his brothers, whose thinking seems never to have risen higher than the earth. To them he was a pest to be gotten rid of in the most convenient way. Their attitude toward Joseph and their treatment of him are typical of what seers and dreamers have experienced through the years. And his achievements, despite the opposition which he met, are but a fair example

of the noble army of dreamers who have led the race into new and better ways.

When we speak of dreamers and their dreams we are thinking not of those who spend their time in idle and fruitless reveries, but of those who see through the material and beyond the present to something nobler. They see a goal that beckons them. There is a significant difference between air castles and dreams. When we build air castles we desire something that we never really expect to obtain; but the dream means a desire in which there is purpose and the resolve to make it come to pass. "We have vision when we see the inward meaning of anything we have to do or to suffer." The race in every phase of life would deteriorate without its men and women of vision. History proves the truth of the statement that where there is no vision the people perish.

With the experiences of Joseph as a basis of our study, let us consider in the first place the significance of the dreamer and his dreams.

Religion has always produced its seers who pictured the future that was to be—men and women who dreamed of the triumph of righteousness over evil in the very hour when unrighteousness seemed

all-powerful. But faith in God causes one to look beyond a discouraging present to a future of hope. Christianity was declared by an apostle to be the fulfillment of the prophet's word, "Your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams." The man of vision does not shut his eyes to realities, but sees them more clearly than the self-styled practical man. Israel's seraphic seer fully realized the peril of his people as he describes their tragic situation: "Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, children that deal corruptly: they have forsaken Jehovah, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they are estranged and gone backward. Why will ye be still stricken, that ye revolt more and more? the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. . . . . Your country is desolate; your cities are burned with fire." But this was not all that Isaiah saw concerning his people. Looking forward to the days ahead he revealed his vision: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of Jehovah is risen upon thee. For, behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the peoples; but Jehovah will arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon

thee. And nations shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising."

That the Apostle Paul was a man of action no one doubts; but he was a dreamer also. They cast his body into prison, but his unfettered mind soared amid the things that were to be. He saw the coming victories of his Master beyond the mists of time. "Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

And John, on the isle of Patmos, looked beyond the present persecution to the far-reaching conquest of Christ: "The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign for ever and ever."

One must not overlook the fact that, in addition to these great spiritual leaders, multitudes of the nameless hosts have in each generation been strengthened and inspired by the vision in their own hearts of evil overcome and righteousness exalted. They have not always lived to see their dreams realized; even as it

was said of some of the early Christians—"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from afar." For someone has said that "religion is the vision of something that stands beyond, behind and within the passing flux of immediate things; something which is real and yet waiting to be realized; something which is a remote possibility and yet the greatest of present facts." Religion is not only a belief; it is a vision. Vision shows us what ought to be and what shall be.

Unfortunately, there are many who are never lifted above life's dull routine by the dream of the better things to come. Happy are the men and women who can look beyond the dark gray skies of winter and see the springtime that is to follow. When a baby smiles in his sleep, we are told that he dreams of the angels in the home from which he has come; but men and women may smile when they dream of the life that is to be. Some are not so blessed. They see only the drab facts: the arrogance of wrong; the grasping hand of greed; and the suffering inflicted by injustice. But Joseph, in the long ago, living with coarse and cruel brothers, felt that God had a purpose for his life and was leading him in the fulfillment of that purpose.

Dreams are they—but they are God's dreams!
Shall we decry them and scorn them?
That men shall love one another,
That white shall call black man brother,
That greed shall pass from the market-place,
That lust shall yield to love for the race,
That man shall meet with God face to face—
Dreams are they all,
But shall we despise them—
God's dreams!

Dreams are they—to become man's dreams!
Can we say nay as they claim us?
That men shall cease from their hating,
That war shall soon be abating,
That the glory of kings and lords shall pale,
That the pride of dominion and power shall fail,
That the love of humanity shall prevail—
Dreams are they all,
But shall we despise them—
God's dreams! [1]

"Behold, this dreamer cometh."

In the second place, the dreamer meets ridicule and opposition.

The path between dreams and achievement is never short nor easy. It often costs dearly to be true

[1] "God's Dreams," by Thomas Curtis Clark. Used by permission.

to the inner vision. Joseph the dreamer found opposition and injustice barring his way just when opportunity called. Ill-treated and sold as a slave by his brothers; falsely accused and flung into prison; forgotten by those whom he had helped—such were the experiences of Joseph. But all those who seek to usher in a higher kind of life, which their generation neither desires nor is fit for, may expect neglect and scorn. When one reviews the experiences of the pioneers in material progress, in discovery and invention, he finds the same attitude toward them. The human race has been slow to recognize its benefactors. The men who have dreamed of improved living conditions have quickly aroused the wrath of those whose privileges might be affected by these changes. And so today the great and powerful entrenched interests seek to belittle and block the way of the men and women who have a vision of justice for all and the giving of a fair chance to the many who are oppressed.

One of the most sordid chapters of the first world war is that which tells of the interested bankers and munition makers of this country putting forth every effort to hinder and to kill the efforts of the President of the United States to bring peace to the warring na-

tions of Europe. And those who dreamed of and worked for peace found that those intoxicated by the lust for gain valued profits more than people. Everyone who holds a lofty program before mankind may well be prepared for ridicule and opposition. But the vision that comes to one sustains him in the face of difficulties. The faith in its ultimate victory strengthens him for the ordeals through which he must pass.

Recently a man who was on his way to a convention to plead for what he believed a more Christlike order of society was being driven to the train by his seventeen-year-old son. The man said to the boy: "Son, you will read in tomorrow's papers how they crucified your father. But forty years from now, when these principles are recognized, you may recall this."

The Christian religion has always produced men and women whose faith could not be destroyed because of the vision of the final triumph of their Leader and his cause.

> And if your own and time betray you,
> If all you hoped and wrought for does not come,
> Why should that dismay you?
> Why should creeping doubt benumb
> The leaping pulses of your will?

Have patience and be strong.
Seems your waiting long?
One has waited longer, who is waiting still.

Again, we see that there has been no progress apart from the dreamers.

This holds true of every phase of human life. Even as it was in the long ago, when God wanted to inaugurate an epoch of special training and discipline for his chosen people, he gave Joseph the dreamer the responsibility of ushering in that period of development. Men like the brothers of Joseph, concerned only with their flocks and herds and the gratification of their bodily desires, can see nothing practical or worthy of their attention in any program that does not yield immediate results; and results with them mean material benefits.

The only way we can hope for improvement in our personal living or in society about us is to look beyond the discouraging situation which now exists and see conditions as they ought and can be; and then throw ourselves wholeheartedly into the realization of that dream. As Dr. G. H. Morrison has reminded us, "All great movements for bettering mankind have begun not in a brain that schemed, but in

a heart that saw." This is well illustrated in the life of William Wilberforce, who more than any other man led in setting free the slaves in the British Empire. Our first picture of him is that of a gambling, dancing dandy. But one day while reading the New Testament his eyes were opened to the pathetic condition of millions of human beings, and in his soul there grew the dream of what ought to be done in their behalf. "Instantly," we are told, "he resigned from his gambling clubs; and after long years of heartbreaking work he heard with joy on his deathbed of the triumph of his cause." And with Paul he could have said, "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision."

The grandest battles that are in progress today are being fought by men and women who have devoted themselves to turning back the forces that blight and debase people who are unable to help themselves. Such a heroic struggle is now being witnessed between Dr. Ambedkar of India, born an outcaste, and the hoary traditions that hold in terrible degradation seventy millions of human beings. For the purpose of giving freedom to these multitudes Dr. Ambedkar has devoted his talented and trained life.

Through nineteen centuries there have always been some followers of Jesus who refused to accept conditions as they found them. They struggled and suffered to remedy those conditions by making known the life-giving message of their Master. They too dreamed and were sustained by their dreams that his Kingdom would come and his will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Our lives are transformed by a life of vision. Life is more than a few bare facts of birth, of deeds, and death; yea, rather, "now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be." The man experiencing a hard life, perhaps with an incurable disease, or bitter disappointment or crushing sorrow, needs above all things to refuse to let his attitude toward life and God be molded by his present situation. If he can see in his present experiences the purpose of a loving Father, and not the happenings of blind chance, he can master his circumstances, however hard they may be.

Again, we are reminded of the achievements of the dreamer.

Joseph, the young dreamer, became the able and efficient food administrator of Egypt; the boy cruelly

treated and misunderstood by his brothers became the highly honored minister of state and the successful leader in public affairs.

The noblest achievements of the race were first dreams in somebody's soul.

In 1666 the city of London was destroyed by fire. Christopher Wren the architect was thirty-four years of age at the time. As he looked upon the blackened and smoldering ruins of the city he saw a vision of a new London far surpassing the old. A part of his dream came true, and he lived to see the completion of St. Paul's cathedral, which was thirty-five years in building. Today one reads this inscription over one of its doorways:

> Beneath is buried Christopher Wren, architect of this church and city, who lived more than ninety years, not for himself, but for the public good. Reader, if thou seekest his monument, look around.

And this man is but one of multitudes who, to some degree at least, have been able to turn into realities the stuff out of which dreams are made.

The achievers have ever been the great dreamers. It is the message that Christians everywhere need to receive. In an age and land where license is mistaken for liberty, where lawlessness and crime are rampant, where intrenched interests ride ruthlessly over multitudes, and where moral and spiritual lethargy falls like a stifling fog over the souls of men, the need is for a man of vision to arise and lead us to a better day. As it happened in Joseph's life, so has it been true through the centuries—the dreamer in the end saved those who mocked and scorned him and his dreams.

MATERIAL PROGRESS AND SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city.—Proverbs 16:32.

THESE WORDS EMPHASIZE THE SUPERIORITY of conquest in the realm of character over material achievements. He who masters himself is worthier than he who leads a victorious army. He who wins the struggle on the battlefield of his own soul deserves greater admiration than a military commander of successful exploits.

This statement was first uttered many centuries ago, but only a few in each generation have believed it to be true. The world has reserved most of its paeans of praise and glowing tributes for those who have material attainments to their credit. It has always been so much easier to read the record of progress in the physical world than in the spiritual. Invention and discovery fire the imagination, and their

gains are quickly appreciated; whereas the heroic souls who have had a vision of a better day for mankind socially and spiritually have found great indifference to their labors, if not active hostility. And it usually remained for future generations to read aright the benefits they have conferred on the race.

It will help us today, in the midst of an age of greater material progress than was ever enjoyed by any people at any time, to pause and give consideration to the principle contained in these ancient words from a wise teacher: "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city." Though applied first to the individual life, it is equally true in the life of the race.

Consider the amazing progress in the material realm which has, in these days, outdistanced moral and spiritual development.

In the early dawn of history God challenged man with the words, "have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." Long and dangerous has been the struggle to accept this challenge, but man has gone even beyond this original

command. The air he uses as channels for his messages; and the sea and earth are yielding their long-hidden treasures for man's development and use. Man has become the monarch in the material kingdom. But he has not been so successful in ruling his own spirit. The wild beasts of the forests have been more easily tamed than the wild passions of his soul. It has been easier to discover and harness the forces of nature for man's protection and enjoyment than it has been to develop and direct man's moral and spiritual possibilities toward the making of a more wholesome world in which to live.

The account of man's progress in material things makes a thrilling epic and reads like a fairy tale. One of our great modern spiritual leaders reminds us that

> stories of old-time miracles are overpassed in our modern days. . . . . Did the Israelites once cross the Red Sea dry-shod? One thing, however, they never would have hoped to do: to cross under and over the Hudson River day after day in multitudes, dry-shod. Did an axe-head float once when Elisha threw a stick into the water? But something no Elisha ever dreamed of seeing we see continually: iron ships navigating the ocean as though it were their natural element. Did Joshua once prolong the day for battle by staying of the sun? Yet Joshua could never have conceived an habitual lighting of the city's homes and streets until by night they

are more brilliant than by day. Did Jericho's walls once fall at the united shout of a besieging people? Those child-like besiegers, however, never dreamed of guns that could blast Jerichos to pieces from seventy miles away.[1]

Nowhere have these achievements been so much in evidence as in America. We are told that the American standard of living increased fourfold between 1790 and 1930. The United States has only 6 per cent of the world's acreage and only 7 per cent of its population, but it has half the world's communication facilities, railways, and electric energy. It produces 92 per cent of the world's automobiles and has one registered for each 4.9 persons; whereas the four other leading nations have one for each 59 persons. It has one radio to each 6 persons against one to each 17 in these four other nations, and one telephone to each 7 persons compared with one for each 35 persons in these same nations. In 1935 there were more than forty-one million people in this country who had savings deposits in the banks, and the same year there were sixty-three million life insurance policyholders. It is estimated that each year the

[1] Harry Emerson Fosdick, *Christianity and Progress,* p. 51. Used by permission of Fleming H. Revell Co.

American people spend ten billion for amusements and recreations.

In the face of these inventions which have brought comfort and luxury to millions of homes and the increase of wealth to our nation, we are forced to the unpleasant realization that this is only part of the story. Millions of our people have been little benefited by this material progress. These gains have not been equally shared. Even in the boom year of 1929, millions of families were living below the line of normal living standards and there was a steadily mounting number of unemployed. Good will was not strong enough to share the material benefits with all our people. Profits were of first concern, and persons were secondary. We have allowed property to become more precious than people. This was seen in the first world war. Our men were drafted, but wealth was not conscripted; rather, the way was paved for the wealth of many to be greatly multiplied during the agonizing times of conflict.

The production of efficient machines has outdistanced the development of our social conscience; and the human factor has not had the attention that it deserved. It has been easier to build great skyscrap-

ers than it has been to eliminate the terrible slums in our cities; or to prevent the lawless element, as racketeers and the politically corrupt, from defrauding and taking life for personal greed and power. President Roosevelt, in his second inaugural address, said:

> In this nation I see tens of millions of its citizens—a substantial part of its whole population—who at this very moment are denied the greater part of what the very lowest standards of today call the necessities of life. I see millions of families trying to live on incomes so meager that the pall of family disaster hangs over them day by day. I see millions whose daily lives in city and on farm continue under conditions labeled indecent by a so-called polite society half a century ago. I see millions denied education, recreation, and the opportunity to better their lot and the lot of their children. I see millions lacking the means to buy the products of farm and factory and by their poverty denying work and productiveness to many other millions. I see one third of a nation ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished.

No, our material progress has not been matched with moral and spiritual development. We need not leave our Southland for illustrations of this fact. Vice-President Henry A. Wallace, after a tour of the Southern states, declared concerning the situation as he found it, "I have never seen among the peasantry of Europe poverty so abject as that which exists in the

great cotton states from Arkansas on to the East Coast."

In all scientific progress there has been nothing more inspiring and more far-reaching than the achievements of the medical profession. Its work in the prevention of disease and the wiping out of plagues has been one of humanity's greatest benefits. Diseases which used to hold terror for the race have been conquered and others now taking enormous toll of life will, by the patient and heroic efforts of scientific men, be eliminated or reduced to a minimum of danger. The death rate in this country per thousand of population in 1890 was 19.6 per cent, and in 1933 it had lowered to 10.7 per cent, a drop of nearly 50 per cent. Human life has been prolonged; not so much that people are living longer, but more people are living to be old. But over against these achievements we are told that a recent survey revealed that during one year 47 per cent of the people in the lowest income group received no medical or dental attention.

There are many today who say that advancement in the material world is all that is necessary. They seem to forget that man is more than body and needs

more than physical attention and comforts. They seem to forget that a Teacher from Galilee once said, "What is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose or forfeit his own self?" Many are looking to science more than to God for satisfaction in living. He is not being denied so much as being displaced. Man's power has often been trusted rather than God's. And many have thought what one has said:

> Glory to man in the highest,
> For man is the master of things.

"He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city."

In the second place, spiritual development is more important for the future of the race than material progress. Unless we have the strength of character to use intelligently the power which science has given us we cannot survive. This generation, with its marvelous physical advantages and the uses to which they have been so often put, reminds one of a little child playing with dynamite and razor blades. When there is lack of spiritual control over material power disaster is always the outcome. Look at the terrible

results when the products of science are turned to the destruction of life and property, as in the years from 1914 to 1918, and in the second world war. Let this continue and civilization will commit suicide, like Brutus falling on his own sword. Someone has reminded us that when science has given us all the power it can, we still need another kind of power which science cannot give. Dr. Alexis Carrel, in his much-discussed book *Man, the Unknown,* says that

> human beings have not grown so rapidly as the institutions sprung from their brains. It is chiefly the intellectual and moral deficiencies of the political leaders, and their ignorance, which endanger modern nations. . . . . What is the good of increasing the comfort, the luxury, the beauty, the size, and the complications of our civilization, if our weakness prevents us from guiding it to our best advantage? It is really not worth while to go on elaborating a way of living that is bringing about the demoralization and the disappearance of the noblest elements of the great races.

This generation needs more than swift transportation, comfortable or luxurious homes. It needs salvation from selfishness, ignorance, sin, heartlessness, indifference, and cruel carelessness. What gain is there in having a home with every modern convenience and luxury if the atmosphere of that home is tainted with

suspicion, mistrust, and lack of affection. There never was a time when so many American homes were so well furnished and when so many of them were crashing in tragic failure. According to the Institute of Marital Relations, "At the present pace American divorce may become an institution more popular than marriage itself. A married couple has only sixty-five chances in a hundred of remaining married more than a year. One divorce is granted every three minutes and one marriage performed every thirty seconds."

The hope of the individual in learning to live successfully lies in the development of his spiritual life. His satisfaction in life, the power to see life through victoriously, comes not from outward but inner resources. "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Science has greatly lengthened the average span of life; but why prolong life if it is purposeless and lived on no higher plane than the animal? How weak and ineffective are material values when the soul faces the real issues of life! There is no substitute for God who can give

peace to the soul in the midst of outward turmoil and disaster. The psalmist gives expression to this in his cry, "My soul, wait thou in silence for God only; for my expectation is from him." And how can one count life a success if he has failed in character?

George Arliss mentions in his autobiography a fellow actor by the name of John Mason, whose work he greatly admired. He makes this significant comment upon him: "John Mason would in my opinion have been the greatest actor in America if his private character had been as well balanced as his public performances."

For our civilization, for our homes and for our individual lives, the true progress is conditional on spiritual development.

In the third place, we need to give first consideration to strengthening the inner life. We can begin by recognizing that things are never to be an end in themselves, but are to be used as a means to something higher and nobler. The worthiest lives have never been tied down by nor dependent upon material possessions. Quality of character and achievement are not dependent on outward circumstances. It is still possible to duplicate Paul's experience, "I

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have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content." And again, "I can do all things in him that strengthened me."

We cannot make ourselves grow spiritually, but we can put ourselves in the right relationship to God, so that we shall receive those influences which will enable us to develop character that can be used of him in his work in the world. "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; so neither can ye, except ye abide in me."

The true progress of this generation is conditioned by its responsiveness to God and to the needs of mankind. And may it be said of the friends of God today as it was of him who first bore that title, "For he looked for the city which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Let us be keenly aware of the need of responding to the call of God, that we too shall have part in making the reign of God real in the hearts of the men and women of our day.

"We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

INTERPRETERS OF LIFE

> There came therefore a voice out of heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The multitude therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it had thundered: others said, An angel hath spoken to him. Jesus answered and said, This voice hath not come for my sake, but for your sakes. —John 12:28-30.

EACH OF US IS AN interpreter of life. We have an outlook on the world. Among all peoples, cultured and barbarian, there is some sort of a philosophy of life. People have certain ideas and beliefs about the world in which they live and the experiences which have been theirs.

In the midst of a world of puzzling and mysterious things each of us is seeking to find a satisfactory explanation of life. We endeavor to take all the various hues and colors and work them into a harmonious whole. We yearn to know causes and are continually asking the reason why things are as they are in the world. We are ever seeking to explain the mean-

ing of our lives. It is perhaps true that many have never admitted that they try to arrive at an interpretation of life, but the heart's deep desire is to know and to possess certainty.

People viewing the same incident give various and varied explanations of it. They are different and their interpretations differ. Explanations arise out of one's inner life and reveal one's outlook on the world.

Near the close of Jesus' public ministry we have an event the explanations of which widely differ. The Master was facing the great crisis of his life; Gethsemane and Calvary were just ahead. In that hour when his soul was troubled he turned to the Father for reassurance as he set himself to carry out, at whatever cost, the Father's will. "There came therefore a voice out of heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The multitude therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it had thundered: others said, An angel hath spoken to him."

The divine response to the prayer of Jesus was explained in three different ways. These three groups have been present in all ages. They are with us today.

The first interpretation of this incident was that it did not rise above the natural. "The multitude therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it had thundered." To them the voice was but the muttering of distant thunder. Their explanation was purely a naturalistic one. The sound was not the voice of God, but merely a common manifestation of nature. Here, then, is the crux of the matter: many people believe that nothing is supernatural, but that all spiritual experiences have a natural or material cause. We are told by many in this age that God does not speak, that what we claim as the voice of God is but the product of our imagination. We desire to feel the touch of the Divine in our lives, so we persuade ourselves that God has communicated with us. The race is divided, in the final analysis, into two groups: those who believe that God speaks to man; and those who believe that either there is no God to speak, or, if there is, he is a being too far removed to be concerned with the needs of humanity. The first group believes that God has not only spoken in ancient times, but that he speaks today.

Let us frankly admit that there has always existed an extreme view of the supernatural which ofttimes

degenerates into fanaticism and superstition. Many things which people have claimed as miraculous have been shown to possess only natural causes. We owe a great debt to science for its help in this respect. In our own day we have witnessed the spectacle of twenty thousand people in one day visiting the grave of a priest near Boston to be healed by touching his tomb. Such incidents probably make it harder for some people to accept the Christian faith. With God, to be sure, there is no such division as natural and supernatural. All things are governed by his law, and he is not a prisoner in his own universe. We believe that God is greater than the universe which he created. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews declares that "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son." And in addition he speaks in the experiences which come to us and in the impressions which we receive when we are seeking his leadership.

There are many people, like this multitude that stood by, who do not recognize the voice of God and who deny that he comes into human lives to inspire

and strengthen. In the face of all evidence, they say as of old, "It thundered." In the presence of a noble life that has suffered greatly through physical afflictions and that manifests a devout and sweet spirit of trust in God's leadership, they say that God has nothing to do with it. It is merely strength of the human will. The one who sees nothing more than the material side of life cannot appreciate the transformation which takes place in the lives of others. People who experience such impressive changes in thought and character that they are literally living new lives, are explained by the naturalistic teaching that all this is man's doing and God has no part in it.

Spiritual things are spiritually seen; and there are many who are spiritually blind and deaf. Their argument is, "I cannot hear the voice of God, and therefore there is no voice of God—it thundered."

Let us turn to the book of Acts for two illustrations of this principle. In the second chapter we have the account of the effects of the coming of God in new power into the lives of the early Christians. The multitude of those who stood by were perplexed and amazed and sought to know the cause of such enthusiasm and power. And some said, "They are filled

with new wine." Not having had such an experience themselves, they were quite sure that it was not of God; but they explained it by saying that the disciples were only drunk.

Again, in the account of Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus we are told that the men with him heard the sound but that Paul alone heard the voice of the Risen One speaking to him. Paul, and not those about him, was able to explain the meaning of this experience.

It is important to remember that those who stand by and pass judgment, as those of old, do not have the necessary experience by which to test the matter about which they speak so authoritatively. Therefore we should not be so easily influenced by the conclusions that some prominent people in science and philosophy give to the world. Who are to be trusted when they give an opinion, those who speak from the outside or those who have experienced that of which they speak? In every realm of life we are most influenced by those whose words come out of their own experience.

Note the attitude of some today who deny that God speaks to man. George Jean Nathan is of the

opinion that "the happier the man, the farther he is from God." This philosopher, who boasts that he lives his life wholly on the physical plane, frankly declares that he has no obligation to anyone else: "The happiness and welfare of mankind are not my profession; I am perfectly willing to leave them to the care of professional missionaries of one sort or another; I have all that I can do to look for my own happiness and welfare." His judgment of other people's motives is naturally colored by his own. "In all my experience," says he, "I have yet to find and know intimately a man worth his salt in any direction who did not think of himself first and foremost."

Do you think that a noble life can be built on such a belief as this expressed by another modern philosopher: "I do not believe that life in general or the world in general has any meaning"?

So much for the philosophers. What effect does the naturalistic view have on the average man and woman? To explain all things in terms of the physical leads to futility, the conviction that all we do is in vain. This attitude is seen in the words of an ancient writer, "So I hated life, because the work that is wrought under the sun was grievous unto me; for

all is vanity and a striving after wind." According to Dean R. R. Wicks, this mood of futility settled down upon the Christians when Christ hung on Calvary. "They felt that what they had been living for had proved futile." The Resurrection delivered them from this feeling. And Paul, at the conclusion of his great chapter on the Resurrection, says, "Wherefore . . . . be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not vain in the Lord." When one finds something worthy to live for, that challenges his best, truly is that one blessed. It is a sad spectacle to behold men successful in business or professional life, who are going through their work because it means a living and because they have developed the habit, but to whom no ideal of service to needy humanity appeals. They continue their work because they are trained for it and because the financial returns are attractive; but it does not seem to occur to them that their lives can be aligned with the greatest purpose, nor do they visualize the possibility of sharing in eternal achievements.

We confront another result of the belief that the physical world is all. Multitudes are living in full

accord with that creed—material things are the first and final goal of existence. They seek for the abundant life in physical sensations. Their motto is, "Whatever is natural is right," and their chart is, "Follow your instincts." They overlook the fact that the Creator endowed us with powers of mind and body, hungerings and thirstings which are to be directed toward the goal which he has given us—strong and noble character. To forget this and live only on the physical plane is to be marred by the very powers which were given to ennoble us. Those who persuade themselves that God does not speak with man, that there is no such thing as victorious life here and endless fellowship with God hereafter, are apt to live by the philosophy, "Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we may die."

An Indian professor who recently visited this country left this word of counsel:

> I think your young people should face frankly at the start of their careers the basic fact that your business system is entirely dedicated to physical problems of making people comfortable, of feeding and clothing them, of transporting them from place to place. The whole structure is founded on the surprising premise that the physical body is the first concern of society, collectively and individually. Physical

welfare within certain limits is, of course, vital. But I believe that the civilized society of tomorrow will use 20 per cent of its time in supplying physical needs instead of 75 per cent to 90 per cent, as you do in the United States.

Alexander Louis Fraser points out, in his lines "Life's Illusion," that the way to the abundant life is not along the way of materialism.

He toiled and saved his earnings every day,
But starved his mind, and grasped at common things;
His prisoned soul ne'er struggled out of clay,
His better nature never found its wings.

He hoped to sit with Happiness at last,
Mansioned, sufficient, when he would be old;
But he was just a graveyard! and the past
Left naught for him but a rude pile of gold.

The first group did not hear the voice of God; to them it was only the rumbling of the thunder. And they said, "It thundered."

There was another group which had its interpretation of the response to Jesus' prayer. It said, "An angel hath spoken to him." The people in this class were more spiritually inclined than those who said that the voice was only thunder, but they were not thoroughly committed to the abiding principle of

religious faith. They admitted that the voice needed more than a naturalistic explanation, but they did not think of it as coming direct from God. There are many today, both within and without the churches, who belong to this company. They are often conscious of their yearnings for a satisfying faith, yet they fail to find a dependable foundation on which to build their lives. They are tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine that blows. They are excellent prospects for the sensational types of religion, and the various isms can always count on them to swell their ranks. Dr. Stanley Jones has said concerning them:

> People of this type . . . . are of the dabbler mind. They are spiritualistic rather than spiritual. They are more interested in phenomena, in psychic manifestations, in dark rooms rather than in dark places of sin and need of the earth; in communications from the dead rather than communicating the Good News to the living. This attitude lacks moral depth—an angel spoke to him.[1]

Paul, on his visit to Athens, found some of their spiritual relatives. They expressed interest in the Apostle's message and desired him to speak to them concerning the Christian faith. The writer of Acts

[1] *Christ and Human Suffering,* p. 143. Used by permission of Abingdon-Cokesbury Press.

has drawn their portrait in these words: "Now all the Athenians and the strangers sojourning there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell or to hear some new thing." And though that mightiest preacher presented the truth to them there was little reward for his efforts. "Some mocked; but others said, We will hear thee concerning this yet again."

The hope of this group is to listen until the voice of God is heard. When they hear and heed the challenge of Jesus, "Seek, and ye shall find," a new light will dawn upon their souls.

> Life is like a wayside bloom
> The butterfly disdains,
> But where the probing honey-bee
> Finds nectar for her pains.

And they said, "An angel hath spoken to him."

There was a third explanation of the voice. Jesus said, "This voice hath not come for my sake, but for your sakes." How many others recognized the divine response we do not know, but others did come later to the realization that God had spoken. The question naturally arises as to why some are sure that God speaks and others hear him not. Dr. F. Godet, in com-

menting on this passage, says: "The whole multitude hear a sound; but the meaning of the voice is perceived by each only in proportion to his spiritual intelligence. Thus, in human speech the wild beast perceives only a sound; the trained animal discovers in it a meaning, a command for example, which is immediately obeyed; man only discerns in it a thought."

> God is not dumb, that he should speak no more
> If thou hast wanderings in the wilderness
> And findest not Sinai—'tis thy soul is poor!
> There towers the mountain of the Voice no less,
> Which whoso seeks shall find—but he who bends
> Intent on manna still and mortal ends,
> Sees it not—neither hears its thundered lore.

Do you desire an increasing certainty in matters of religious faith? Then remember that we must be in that relationship to God which makes it possible for us to hear when he speaks. Jesus, completely surrendered to his Father's will, ready to go through shadows of Gethsemane and the anguish of Calvary, received assurance from God. If we refuse our cross, if we seek to please ourselves and are halfhearted in our response to God, we need not be surprised to

feel the fog of doubt thick about us. The Master's condition for receiving spiritual knowledge is obedience. "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching."

One of Browning's characters, Pompilia, caught in the dark and cruel mystery, does not surrender to cynicism or unbelief, but remembers a beautiful life which has brightened hers and sings:

> Through such souls alone
> God stooping shows sufficient of his light
> For us i' the dark to rise by. And I rise.

There are three classes of people in relation to the things of the Spirit. There are those who make flat denial of any interest shown in mankind by the Creator. Some, though not confessing this, nevertheless live out this attitude day by day. "It thundered." There are others who are in shadows; they cannot believe that God speaks directly. These stop short of faith in God's active leadership in human affairs today. "An angel spoke to him." But there are still others who seek to know him not by man-made rules, but in his own way. And their trust grows stronger and their hope brighter day by day.

THE MARKS OF THE MASTER

For I bear branded on my body the marks of Jesus.
—Galatians 6:17.

THE MAN WHO WROTE THESE words was a battle-scarred veteran. He had seen service in many campaigns. Each scar on Paul's body bore mute but eloquent testimony to his devotion to Christ and his cause. Others might look with pity at the evidence of the cruel lash and rod in the Apostle's flesh, but Paul was proud of them. They were part of his credentials as Christ's messenger among men; they testified to his loyalty to the Master.

The custom of branding the human body is an ancient one which has been widespread among many tribes and nations. The word used in the text for "marks" is the one on which we have built our English words stigma and stigmatize. We are told that ofttimes marks were branded on slaves to indicate the owner, on worshipers to signify their god, and on soldiers to designate the commander.

For one thing, these marks on his body were for Paul the signs of the slave. Paul thought and spoke of himself as a slave of Christ, and he could point to the scars he carried as evidence of that ownership. We in this country are familiar with the practice of branding animals to indicate ownership. This has been especially true among the cattle owners of the West, where more than two thousand different brands have been used. Great numbers of cattle grazed together on the open ranges; but in the fall roundup ownership was recognized by the brand on each animal. And it was the cruel usage of some ancient peoples to brand the slave with a mark on the forehead or some other part of his body, to show to whom he belonged.

The great question to be settled by each of us is, "Who owns me?" And we must choose one of two answers. The title of ownership is still in possession of self, or it has been transferred to God. Paul declared again and again that he belonged to God—he was the slave, the possession of the Master. In a number of his letters he writes of himself as the slave of Christ. The translation "servant" softens down and changes the meaning for people of today of the

relationship which he declared existed between himself and Christ. The Christian message challenges the individual to renounce ownership by self and acknowledge God as his possessor. When this question is settled aright many of the major problems of life will be seen in a different light and will be far along toward their solution. The Apostle set forth the Christian viewpoint when he said, "Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body." The psalmist centuries before had declared, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein." It is the Christian's high principle voluntarily to acknowledge that he belongs to God. He desires "to be to the Eternal Goodness what his own hand is to a man." Luther Rice, missionary statesman and educator, founder of Columbia College, now known as George Washington University, in telling of his spiritual struggles in youth and the peace that came to him through his decision to venture all for God, said: "But now all was changed: I was on the side of God—was his, and had no longer

anything to do *of my own,* but in his service, as his property. . . . . He later assured others that the only way . . . . was *to give ourselves absolutely to God!"*

Various translations of the text make more vivid this meaning. Dr. Goodspeed renders these words thus: "For I bear on my body the scars that mark me as a slave of Jesus." And Dr. Moffatt says, "I bear branded on my body the owner's stamp of the Lord Jesus"; while still another version reads, "I bear in my body the scars which mark my bondage to the Lord Jesus." Here is the declaration, in no uncertain terms, that unconditional surrender has been made to the Master and complete submission to his will acknowledged. To be in bondage to man brings sorrow and misery, but to be a slave of Christ is glorious freedom—"if therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." "So freedom is not to be able to do what we will, but to will to do what we ought."

Make me a captive, Lord,
And then I shall be free;
Force me to render up my sword,
And I shall conqueror be.

I sink in life's alarms
When by myself I stand;
Imprison me within thine arms,
And strong shall be my hand.
My heart is weak and poor
Until it master find;

. . . . . .

Enslave it with thy matchless love,
And deathless it shall reign.

We are told that there was a time in the history of England when once a year the Earl of Lincoln presented the King a white rose in a silver casket. Having fallen into the ill favor of the ruler, all the Lincoln estates had been forfeited to the crown. But when, later on, the court once more smiled upon them and restored their property, the earls of Lincoln were directed to present, each year, a rose to the King, acknowledging the fact that they held their estates by His Majesty's favor. And the Apostle who began a letter to his Christian friends by writing, "Paul, a slave of Jesus Christ," could consistently say to them, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service." This is not an unreasonable challenge to give to the

followers of Him who took upon himself the form of a slave.

This relationship between Christ and his followers, which Paul makes vivid under the figure of master and slave, is entered into voluntarily. He would coerce no man's will. And those who have most completely surrendered to him have found the largest freedom and most joyful service.

"Jesus, standing before Pilate, was a free man, while the Roman governor, wielding almost imperial authority, was a slave to his fears and ambitions. Felix, while sitting upon the judgment seat, was in bondage to his lusts, and was terrified at the mention of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come; while Paul, wearing his shackles, could look his foes in the face and say of a truth, 'I was free born.' " Many in these days, confusing liberty with license, and seeking to throw off all moral restraint, find themselves in pitiful bondage to character-destroying habits. They are deluded in life and defeated in death. "If therefore the Son shall set you free, ye shall be free indeed." Paul had found that freedom in him and was glad to proclaim, "I bear on my body the scars that mark me as a slave of Jesus."

In the second place, we may think of these marks on Paul's body as his credentials of consecration. The ancient historians tell us that in many pagan temples there was a class of slaves attached for life to the services of the temple who were branded with the name of the god they worshiped.

We are branded by what or whom we serve; for the object of our affections and our worship leaves its mark upon us. The god of lust is daily marking its devotees; while others remind us of the God of love. Mohammed has said, "The best of God's servants are those who, when seen, remind of God." We grow like that which we adore. And in the last book of the Bible we have a picture of a great multitude on Mount Zion having the Father's name written in their foreheads. This is not only seen in noble character, but ofttimes in the countenances of people. "Some faces mean and teach purity the instant we look upon them."

In *The Three Musketeers* Dumas tells of the beautiful young woman who married the nobleman of the province. She gave the impression of being cultured, of noble lineage, and high ideals. But her husband one day made a horrible discovery—for

branded on her shoulder was a fleur-de-lis, the French mark placed upon a criminal. Her true character, though hidden for a while, was revealed in the brand mark she bore. All of which is a parable of life. We are marked by our ideals and desires. The attitudes, the words, and the sacrificial life of the Apostle, as well as the marks of his body, revealed his unwavering and intense devotion to Christ.

We know also that the scars on Paul's body were received in line of duty for his Master. And we are reminded, as we look back across the centuries of Christian history, that he is but one among a noble multitude who endured hardships and persecutions, who suffered physical and mental anguish for their faith in Christ. "These are they that come out of the great tribulation, and they washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God."

When one's convictions of right and honor are so strong and one's faith in God so unfaltering as to make one to suffer and if need be to die before surrendering them, they leave an indelible impression upon others. Thus we remember the great influence on both the church and the world of the martyrs,

past and present, who accepted death rather than deny their Lord. Here is a picture that the Apostle gives of himself and his companions as they pioneered in perilous places to proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ to a pagan world: "Pursued, yet not forsaken; smitten down, yet not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body."

It is most befitting that the cross should be central in our thinking and at the heart of our faith and worship. Sermons will continue to be preached and songs sung about the cross. The cross is the symbol of voluntary suffering; and when lived out, proves for the Christian the sincerity of his faith. There is no better way of convincing the world that we believe what we profess than by suffering for our faith. People do not patiently endure suffering and persecution for a fad or a whim. Many in other lands in these days are facing loss of property and civil privileges, are the objects of boycott, and must endure exile for their religion. Are we willing to bear a stigma for Jesus? Are we ready to be laughed at and snubbed because of an uncompromising stand for the right? Paul was willing to be called a fool for Christ's sake.

Many doubtless so thought of him when he turned from the leadership in his party and from the great influence he had among his people to become a member of the despised band of Nazarenes. This age, with its tendencies toward moral flabbiness, has great need for more of God's fools.

In his second letter to the Corinthians Paul lists some of the things which befell him as an ambassador of the Master. "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep; . . . . in labor and travail, in watchings often, ... in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things that are without, there is that which presseth upon me daily, anxiety for all the churches." This recital of burdens endured has been duplicated in the lives of many of Christ's followers. Modern missionaries in war-torn countries have perhaps experienced equally severe ordeals, as they bravely stayed at their posts amid the indescribable calamities of scientific warfare. But what have we suffered? If they who endured cheerfully so much for Christ are

called Christian, what should we be called with our emphasis upon ease and safety?

Paul refers in this passage to both sorts of burdens which he bore for the Master's sake. He endured all kinds of physical pain and hardships, but in addition he had to face misunderstanding, lack of sympathy where he had a right to expect it, and the heavy responsibilities that fell upon him as a leader in his Lord's cause.

People sometimes declare that they would die for their faith; and many have laid down their lives rather than to turn away from God. But there is a companion question that needs to be pondered: "Are we willing to live for our faith?" The historian tells us that when Queen Elizabeth came to the throne of England she found a number of people imprisoned on account of their religious convictions. After these were set free by the newly crowned ruler, some of them, who had been ready to face prison and death for their faith, failed to live for Him. They did not think that

'Tis more brave
To live than to die.

The good soldier of Christ Jesus may have to endure not only the grave dangers, but the monotonous routine day by day. The wrong attitude may be revealed in lesser trials as well as the greater. In parts of Idaho there is much territory untouched by railroads. The hauling of ore, lumber, and other products is mostly done by six-horse teams over difficult mountain roads. The horses are under a severe strain, and the drivers fear above all else not major accidents but tiny galls upon the shoulders or small bruises on the frogs of the hoof which unfit them for work on hard roads and make useless an otherwise sound horse. Many people allow the small bruises of life to turn them from the path of duty, to render them unfit for the Master's service.

We are all in danger of inconsistency here. We pride ourselves on being willing to die for our faith, but will not go to a prayer meeting on a rainy night. The question for most of us is not whether we will be crucified for Jesus, but whether we will be inconvenienced for him; it is not a question of whether we will be thrown to the wild beasts for our faith, but whether we will curb the wild beasts of passion and selfishness in our own lives. Has our faith cost

us anything? Have we any scars to bear testimony that we have campaigned for Christ?

The most precious possessions which we have today were bought with somebody's suffering. Others bore persecution and carried many scars that we might worship God according to the dictates of our consciences. For freedom's sake, both civil and religious, many have nobly lived and nobly died. John Bunyan was not least among them. For more than twelve years he lingered in Bedford jail because he dared to obey God rather than man. Though he was willing to stand by the truth to the last drop of his blood, perhaps the most grievous part of his imprisonment was his sorrow over the hardships which fell upon his loved ones. Thus he writes in prison:

> The parting with my wife and poor children hath often been to me, in this place, as the pulling of the flesh from my bones; and that not only because I am somewhat too fond of these mercies; but also because I should have often brought to my mind the many hardships, miseries and wants that my poor family was likewise to meet with; especially my poor blind child, who lay nearer my heart than all I had beside. Oh, the thoughts of the hardships I thought my blind one might go under, would break my heart to pieces. Poor child, thought I, what sorrow art thou like to have for thy portion in this world! Thou must be beaten, must beg, suffer hun-

ger, cold, nakedness, and a thousand calamities, though I cannot now endure the wind shall blow upon thee! But yet, recalling myself, thought I, *I must venture you all with God,* though it goeth to the quick to leave you. Oh, I saw in this condition I was as a man who is pulling down his house upon the head of his wife and children; yet, thought I, I must do it, I must do it.

Like Paul, his scars were the credentials of his consecration to Christ.

In the third place, the marks on Paul's body were trophies of triumph. Let us read this declaration aright; he did not say I *have,* but "I *bear* branded on my body the marks of Jesus." The figure here is that of the triumphant commander coming back from the field of battle bearing the spoils of victory. The Apostle had the right to be proud of his scars, for he had received them as he followed his Leader in many campaigns against evil forces, and as he proclaimed the reign of God to the hearts and consciences of men.

In an old soldiers' home an aged veteran of the Civil War was talking to a younger acquaintance about his experiences during the tragic days of '61-65. The old man, with flushed face and sparkling eyes, reached the climax of his recital as he drew back the sleeve on his right arm and revealed an ugly jagged

scar from elbow to shoulder—"This," he said with deep pride, "I got when I followed Stonewall Jackson." The aged soldier looked upon his scar as evidence of his loyalty to his leader and to the cause to which he gave himself.

Those who, like Paul, Francis of Assisi, Bunyan, Kagawa, and millions of unsung heroes, find a cause for which they risk their all are not afraid to face the results of such a committal. They cannot be understood by those who never get beyond the little circle of their own personal interest—for "he jests at scars who never felt a wound." A mighty devotion in their hearts enables men and women to go on courageously in the face of discouragements and ridicule. The strength of God's presence inspires them to endure. "Probe a little deeper," said one of Napoleon's wounded soldiers to the surgeon, "and you will find the Emperor." And he who had received wounds in his Master's service said, "Wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake." Thus, devotion to God can cause one to transform his troubles into triumphs; to transpose his persecutions into praises; to translate his sufferings into

songs; and to transmute his defeats into devotion. The worst that can befall him but serves to make clearer to him the invisible realities of life and enables him to see that all things work together for good to them that love God. And of such it can be said, as of another,

> His breast with wounds unnumbered riven,
> His back to earth, his face to heaven.

In *Pilgrim's Progress* we are told that Mr. Valiant-for-Truth made a will. "My sword I give to him that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage, and my courage and skill to him that can get it. *My marks and scars I carry with me, to be a witness for me that I have fought His battles who will now be my rewarder.*" And it is a most befitting conclusion to the story of this noble character that he approached the river of death fearlessly. "So he passed over, and all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side."

When we shrink from the thought of bearing scars for Christ, suffering for our faith, let us recall Edward Shillito's poem:

> If we never sought, we seek thee now;
> Thine eyes burn through the dark, our only stars;

THE MARKS OF THE MASTER

We must have sight of thorn-pricks on thy brow,
  We must have thee, O Jesus of the Scars.
The heavens frighten us; they are too calm;
  In all the universe we have no place.
Our wounds are hurting us; where is the balm?
  Lord Jesus, by thy Scars we claim thy grace.
If when the doors are shut, thou drawest near,
  Only reveal those hands, that side of thine;
We know today what wounds are, have no fear,
  Show us thy Scars, we know the countersign.
The other gods were strong; but thou wast weak;
  They rode, but thou didst stumble to a throne;
But to our wounds God's wounds alone can speak,
  And not a god has wounds, but thou alone.[1]

"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."

[1] "Jesus of the Scars," from *The Christian Century*. Used by permission.

THREE VIEWS OF THE EMPTY TOMB

> Now on the first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, while it was yet dark, unto the tomb, and *seeth* the stone taken away from the tomb.—John 20:1
>
> Simon Peter . . . . entered into the tomb; and he *beholdeth* the linen cloths lying.—John 20:6
>
> Then entered in therefore the other disciple also, ... and he *saw,* and believed.—John 20:8

THESE THREE FOLLOWERS OF JESUS at his empty tomb looked upon it differently. The same object impressed each of them in a different way. They did not see alike, and their conclusions based on what they saw were dissimilar. This incident on the first resurrection day has an impressive lesson for us of this day. Mary Magdalene, Simon Peter, and John faced the same situation, but their interpretations of it were unlike. The scene affected them differently.

It is of supreme importance that we look at life aright. To see things clearly and in their proper

relationship; to be able to perceive the inner meaning or purpose of the facts of our experience, has no little part in living successfully. And when we fail in this, much unnecessary doubt and perplexity and sometimes anguish of soul result.

A different word is used to describe how each of these, who had in common their love of Christ, looked at the empty tomb on that triumphant day when hope was reborn. Mary Magdalene came and saw the stone rolled away from the tomb. The word carries the meaning of "to look" or "to glance." Immediately this woman, who so dearly loved her Master, jumped to the conclusion that his enemies had come during the darkness of the night and had stolen the body of Jesus from Joseph's sepulcher. She quickly rushed forth, with a new sorrow in her heart, to tell the disciples of her discovery. "She runneth therefore, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we know not where they have laid him." Mary's conclusion was based on a hasty view, an inadequate investigation; it was incorrect. The verdict of the senses was untrue.

The Master had done much for Mary, having given her new hope by breaking the power of evil in her life. She had entered into a new way of life, and her heart was filled with grateful devotion to Him who had brought her the good news of forgiveness and had led her into a new life. She was one of those faithful women who inspired Eaton Stannard Barrett's lines:

> Not she with trait'rous kiss her Master stung,
> Not she denied Him with unfaithful tongue;
> She, when apostles fled, could danger brave,
> Last at His cross, and earliest at His grave."

And yet this woman, with deep devotion in her heart, made the mistake that many have repeated since—of basing an assumption upon a superficial examination. Sincere Christians not a few have experienced unnecessary doubts because of this way of arriving at conclusions about the supreme questions of life. And as a result, they, like Bunyan's Pilgrim, find themselves sometimes in the Slough of Despond and at other times imprisoned in the dismal cell in Doubting Castle.

It is altogether important for our spiritual welfare

that we not only see the facts, but that we be careful of the interpretations we make of those facts. Things are, quite often, not what they seem. The earth seems to be flat, but it isn't; it appears to be stationary, but it is speeding at a terrific rate through space. When one looks for the last time upon the still face of a loved one, once so expressive with the light of love, the verdict of the senses declares that death has ended all. But faith spurns this conclusion, being assured that

> Life is ever lord of Death
> And Love can never lose its own.

The agnostic, Joseph Wood Krutch, looks at life and draws the conclusion that it is "merely a physiological process with only a physiological meaning," and that man has been overestimated, being in his judgment of no more significance than an insect. But an Apostle of Christ thought quite differently when he confidently affirmed, "Now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be." A French philosopher once stated that he believed that the God who created the world had died and left it to run on toward chaos and destruction.

But Paul of Tarsus had a different interpretation as he thought of God's creative work. "For in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, ... and he is before all things, and in him all things hold together." One does not hesitate in deciding which attitude leads to the more constructive and satisfactory way of life. How we look at life determines what we will do about it.

It is said that an ambassador to England in the eighteenth century reported to his countrymen that Christianity was obsolete and would soon be a thing of the past. Religion was at a low ebb and the churches showed a lack of spiritual power. There was a tragic gap between official religion and the everyday living of the multitudes. But soon came the Wesleys, who saw not only these facts, but interpreted them to be a challenge to apply the Gospel of redemption to individuals and to society. And these men and their associates, under God's leading, stirred England with a mighty revival as perhaps no spiritual awakening has ever done. And one historian declares that this movement saved Britain from an industrial revolution.

Mary Magdalene's assumption that the Master's

tomb had been violated brought her added sorrow. "But Mary was standing without at the tomb weeping." The immediate cause of this grief was the thought that the body of Jesus would not receive the protection and care that friends had sought to provide for it. She would soon discover that this new anguish was wholly unnecessary and without basis in fact. It often happens today that people are needlessly perplexed about questions of their faith. Is it not strange that so many Christians are disturbed over the utterances of those who have made only a superficial investigation of religious matters? There has never been a lack of those who readily give their opinions on great issues of faith with which they have had no personal experience at all. An apt description of these is found in the words of Paul about certain people of his day when he declared that "they understand neither what they say nor whereof they confidently affirm."

Mr. Luther Burbank was a genius with plant life and made lasting contributions to our physical welfare through his tireless experiments. Surely we are greatly indebted to him for his achievements in this field; but when he spoke about spiritual matters with

which he had never become acquainted, intelligent people of faith were little influenced by his pronouncements. Mr. Thomas A. Edison also through long years of patient toil made the world indebted to him. Through his many discoveries and inventions he has added greatly to man's power and comfort. He was truly one of the chief benefactors of man's material well-being, and a liberal contributor in giving mankind the benefits of scientific research. He was a recognized authority in that realm to which he gave his life; but that did not enable him to speak with finality on the question of the life of the soul after death. There is a law in the realm of truth as real as the law of gravitation in the material realm, and it is stated thus: "Now the natural [material] man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged." Therefore, the opinions of those who make a cursory examination of religion will not affect the faith of the spiritually mature.

Our need is for more than a hasty view both of the claims of religion and of the situation which confronts civilization today. As we look out over a dis-

tressed world, torn asunder by conflicting ideas and movements; a world in which materialism is the chief god of multitudes; where force is the only law recognized by political leaders in many lands; where crime and lawlessness increase and civilization is in danger of relapsing into paganism, can we see other forces at work, on the success of which rest the hopes of the race? "I had fainted," said the psalmist, "unless I had believed to see the goodness of Jehovah in the land of the living."

Mary Magdalene, in glancing at the tomb with the stone rolled away, made an assumption which was incorrect but which brought her greater anxiety. A conclusion based on a hasty view of the situation deepened her sorrow.

We turn from Mary to Simon Peter. A stronger word is used in describing his view of the tomb. It carries with it the meaning of looking at a thing with interest and for a purpose. It unites in one the observation of the fact and the reflection on the fact. Simon Peter, on hearing the declaration from Mary that someone had stolen the Master's body, rushed forth with John, and they ran to the tomb. Upon their arrival Simon Peter went into the tomb and

beheld what lay about him. Let us not forget that this word means to look intently at something, to view attentively or to contemplate. He sought to investigate the interior of the tomb. He noted that the cloths which had been about the body of the Master were placed in an orderly way. This convinced him that Mary's conclusion, that the body of Jesus had been stolen, was incorrect. The headcloth was folded carefully and placed by itself, as though it had been leisurely arranged. Thus, in Simon's examination of the tomb he saw more than Mary had seen and he rejeced her theory, for if someone had stolen his body there would not have been such an orderly tomb as he found. We cannot be certain as to just the conclusion that this disciple reached. John tells us nothing in the passage before us, but Luke's words do throw light on the state of Simon's feelings as he returned from the tomb: "And he departed to his home, wondering at that which was come to pass." He may have been overwhelmed with joy at the thought that the Master had indeed risen as he had said, but the news was too good to accept. Then the disciples in the Upper Room that very evening seem to have been in the same state, for as Jesus appeared

to them for the first time after the Resurrection, the record is that "they still disbelieved for joy, and wondered." Great and unexpected tidings of joy often appear to us unreal, as in the case of the ancient Hebrews—"When Jehovah brought back those that returned to Zion, we were like unto them that dream."

The dictionary tells us that wonder is a feeling of mingled surprise and curiosity excited by something extraordinary. Simon Peter's experience at the empty tomb seems to illustrate this definition. In Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress,* when Christian had come to the cross and had lost his burden, we are told that "he stood still to look and to wonder, for it was very surprising to him that the sight of the cross should thus ease him of his burden." And the disciple, when he had come to the tomb and had looked carefully about him, went away wondering. Did he ask himself, "Can it be true that Jesus actually arose from the dead?" Evidently he had not arrived at the point of believing in the Resurrection, but he was on his way toward that faith.

Are there not many today within organized Christianity who find themselves wondering about the

great promises and ideals of their faith? They do not reject them outright—and yet they find them unreal. They wonder if these far-reaching statements of the Gospel are not beyond the power of mortal man to put into practice. Many are wondering about the promise of the Master that "whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die." Can we hope to meet again, in the life beyond, those whom we have loved and lost awhile?

John sees more than Mary and Simon Peter—"Then entered in therefore the other disciple also, ... and he saw, and believed." He not only saw the empty tomb as did Mary, and the orderly arrangement as did Peter, but he perceived that the situation pointed to but one conclusion—and into his heart came the faith that Christ had arisen from the dead. This belief was not based on a previous interpretation of the Scriptures, for we are told that "they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead."

John was perhaps the most spiritually sensitive of all the apostles. He seems to have been quicker to understand the Master and to perceive the meaning of his teachings than the others. It was not an acci-

dent that this disciple perceived and believed before the others. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned. John had so responded to the leadership of Jesus that he was able to see and appreciate truth where others overlooked it; as he sought to have the attitude and spirit of the Master he was enabled to find new and significant meanings in the experiences of life. The trained intellect alone does not make discoveries about God. "Canst thou by searching find out God?" Other things being equal, he discovers most who is most in sympathy with the object of his search. Those who make disinterested research find many secrets in the realm of the material, but the things of the Spirit become the possession of those who seek them with earnest desire and deep yearning. This has been true of the noblest men and women in all ages.

John illustrated the statement of the dramatist that "love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind." It is not without significance that he who was called the disciple whom Jesus loved was the first to believe in his resurrection from the dead. Blessed is the man who possesses not only sight but insight. Ruskin said that a cat may look at a king, but added that a

cat cannot see a king. To a cat, a king was no more than a servant, for it could not distinguish between them. A king as such was meaningless to a cat; and the most abiding things are without meaning to multitudes today. The inability to see the best things in their true light has characterized people in each generation. Many people looked upon Jesus, who was moved with compassion in the presence of human needs, and saw only a companion of the low and outcast; they looked upon him as he enjoyed the social fellowship of people and saw a man who liked good food and wine. Others, looking upon him with the eyes of love, saw one who did all things well, and who spake as never man spake. The power not only to see a thing, but to see into it and find a deeper meaning, is a priceless possession. Some in the hour of loss and sorrow can see only a future of dread and deepening despair. Ohers, while feeling the full force of the blow, can still hope for better things ahead, as one of old—"he endured, as seeing him who is invisible." There are those who have learned that material things are not final, and though they fail utterly, the invisible realities still remain.

Be like the bird that, halting in her flight,
Awhile on boughs too slight,
Feels them give way beneath her and yet sings—
Knowing that she hath wings!

It has been aptly stated that looking is not seeing. People have stood in the presence of the world's greatest paintings and never caught the artist's meaning; others have visited and looked upon a country's most sacred shrines and have come away unmoved—they saw the stone and the mortar, and that was all. What we see depends on what we are. The higher we go, the more we see. If we want the mountain-top view of life we must be willing to climb the mountain. If we would see the king in his beauty we must prepare ourselves for the vision. Mr. Edward Bok makes this thought clear in one of his stories about an Indian chief. It seems that the old leader had a custom of testing out the courage and endurance of the young men by making them run in one continuous effort as far up the mountainside as they could go. Early in the morning four young braves started out on their severe ordeal. The first returned, bringing with him a branch from the spruce tree, thus showing how high he had gone. The next one

brought back a twig of pine. The third, a shrub. But the moon had risen before the last of the young braves returned. He was exhausted, and his feet were bleeding from the sharp rocks.

"What did you bring, and how high did you ascend?" asked the chief.

"Sire," he replied, "where I went there was neither spruce nor pine to shelter me from the sun, nor flowers to cheer my path, but only rocks and snow and barren land. My feet are torn; I am exhausted; and I have come late, but"—and a wonderful light came into the young brave's eyes—"I saw the sea!"

Open my eyes, that I may see
Glimpses of truth thou hast for me;
Place in my hands the wonderful key
That shall unclasp, and set me free.

Silently now I wait for thee,
Ready, my God, thy will to see;
Open my eyes, illumine me,
Spirit divine! [1]

We may cultivate the ability to see more clearly. John Burroughs, the naturalist, said that we may drill

[1] By C. H. Scott. Used by permission of F. E. Hathaway, copyright owner.

ourselves to see exactly what we wish to see. Does not this apply to spiritual insight as well as to physical seeing? The secret is to develop the habit of looking intently at the things that are not seen. "Not by a first casual glance, but by a steady, deliberate aim of the eye, are the rarest things discovered. You must look intently, and hold your eye firmly to the spot, if you are to see more than do the rank and file of mankind." These words were written to guide one to greater discoveries in the material realm, but they are equally applicable to the seeker of truth.

And John saw and believed.

These three followers of the Master were led into a deeper insight of their Lord and his words. When Mary Magdalene later beheld him and hastened joyfully away with the glad tidings to the others, saying, "I have seen the Lord," we witnessed a triumph of grateful devotion.

Simon Peter passed from wonderment to a faith whose loyalty knew no limits. A few weeks later he is the fearless preacher on Pentecost, and through years following becomes one of the trusted leaders of Christ's hosts. In him we see the transformation of a stumbling cowardly life into a heroic and noble

character because he came to see the living Christ as his and the world's hope.

And John, to whom are attributed five books of the New Testament and who continues to cast an ever-lengthening shadow of influence over the passing generations, shows the triumph of that spiritual insight born of understanding love.

RISEN WITH CHRIST

> If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth. For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory.—Colossians 3:1-4.

THE WORSHIP OF CHRISTENDOM AT Eastertide centers about a twofold subject: the immortality of the soul, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. For the Christian, immortality is made a reality through fellowship with the living Lord. In the words of Paul, it was "our Saviour Christ Jesus, who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

Time forbids that we should pause in this meditation to re-examine the details which are recorded of the first resurrection morning. We do not linger to refresh our memories with age-old proofs or to seek for new evidence of the rising of Jesus from the dead.

THE TWOFOLD POWER OF THE GOSPEL

We rejoice in the resurrection of Jesus as the most glorious event of Christian history and experience. We would make our approach to this theme a personal and practical one. Our hearts need the impetus of a new appreciation and application of the truth of the resurrection. We are not primarily concerned now with a logical array of proof of the historical fact nor of the details of how Christ arose from the dead. But we are concerned about the relation of that fact to our own lives. Is it true that, because we claim belief in One who triumphed over the tomb, that belief really changes our lives? Does that belief bring us hope and inspiration? Does it give us courage in the face of life's greatest difficulties? Does it bring peace to us in the presence of death? The resurrection may mean all this and more to us when it becomes a part of our own experience.

In order that we may be guided in our thinking upon the subject "Risen with Christ," let us give heed to some great words of Paul concerning the Christian view of immortality. In the third chapter of Colossians, the first four verses, we read: "If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of

God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth. For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory."

These words indicate that the risen life is communicated. The phrase, "If then ye were raised together with Christ," suggests the bringing back from the dead to life. The figure is set forth in baptism, the burial of the old life and the resurrection of the new life in Christ. "We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life." The New Testament in many places declares that we are risen with Christ; we are dead in trespasses and in sins until "God, being rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, ... made us alive together with Christ." The risen life means a life that grows like Christ; but before there be the risen life there must be death. We must die to selfishness in order to live unto God. "Even so reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus." And the Master declared the neces-

sity of dying to self-will when he said, "Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit." Thus the resurrection of Jesus besides bringing the seal of his mission and messiahship, and the pledge and prophecy of our resurrection, is also a symbol of new life for his followers. "True Christianity operates a death to the old self, to sin and to the whole present order of things, and endows a man with new tastes, desires, and capacities, like a resurrection to a new being."

Life is responsiveness, death unresponsiveness. Where there is no response to God's advance of love there is spiritual death. But when the soul, aroused from its sleep of death by divine influences, feels the need of God and yearns in hunger after God and yields to him, then it receives new life.

The question of the resurrection must not be conceived as detached. It must ever be thought of in relation to one's own life. The radiant truth at the heart of Christian theology is the resurrection of Christ; the mightiest fact in human experience is the miracle of the coming of divine life into the soul.

A national magazine recently reported:

RISEN WITH CHRIST

A group of executives sat tense and silent in an office in the R.C.A. Building in New York City. They stared with incredulous eyes at a purple orchid. A short time before it had been rescued from a pile of debris, a withered yellow thing—dead. Now the petals were fresh and crisp, its colors vivid. It was blooming with new life, and would continue to do so for sixteen or seventeen days.

The reason for this startling transformation was the addition of a properly prepared chemical to the water in which the flower had been placed, with the result that the apparently dead cells began to function, and the orchid lived again. Many a life bruised and battered and broken by evil has, in the hands of the Divine Chemist, found new life and power, new beauty of character, and a deathless hope.

Easter is meaningless to those who have no resurrection experience in their own souls. The glad cry at Joseph's empty tomb, "He is not here; for he is risen," sounds as the words of a mocker to those who have refused to receive the divine touch.

There is a Resurrection Life
That I must share,
A tomb that I must leave;

And though I bear
The wounds which I have won upon a cross,
Transfigured they shall shine—
A sacramental pledge of Love and Faith,
To make his rising mine.

And He "whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it," this Life that triumphed over death, will communicate to us life indestructible and eternal, if we will receive it. "For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

The words of our text present, in the second place, the truth that the risen life is challenged.

"Seek the things that are above, where Christ is." A genuine faith in the resurrection envolves more than looking forward to a life beyond the grave; it means a life to be lived now in this world of confusion and evil. The new life commenced here is challenged to live here before it will be consummated in glory. Between the two mountainpeaks of Christian experience, the dawn of eternal life in the soul and the continuation of that life beyond, lies the valley of struggle and service through which each must pass. It is here that we must face bravely the issues of our

earthly existence. Truly should we welcome every demand made upon us and rejoice that we are now the sons of God and are already living an immortal life in the realm of time.

Many in thinking of the resurrection seem to get no further than the garden scene with its empty tomb; no further than the worship services on an Easter day with its beautiful anthems, flowers, and sermons on immortality. We cannot afford to linger on the outside of so mighty a truth as this. We enter into its meaning when we accept the challenge to live the risen life with Christ in this world. And that risen life is to find worthy and impressive expression both in our character and our conduct.

The semipagan civilization of today would neutralize and make ineffective, since it cannot destroy, the ideals of the Christian way of life. In such a hostile environment we are challenged to exhibit in our lives the truth that we profess in our creeds. Our lives are to be the proof of our faith in the resurrection. Was not this the thought in the prayer of Paul when he yearned to "know him, and the power of his resurrection"? Consider that power of the resurrection in the lives of the first Christians. After the cruci-

fixion the disciples fled in fear. Black despair descended upon their souls. But when they realized that their Leader was not dead, but alive, a wonderful change came over them. They accepted the challenge of their living Lord and went forth to face the opposition and persecution of their day with a heroism which still inspires us. Courage, not cowardice, marked these men. To every hostile effort, to all who would hinder and threaten them, their answer was, "We must obey God rather than men." This courage was the result of a renewed and nobler faith in their Master and in one another. The desire to share with others their hope in God and their way of life was to characterize these men and women even unto death. The daily battle against unworthy appeals, the struggle against our selfish natures, will issue in victory only when we are receiving the strength and guidance which is of God. Our citizenship is in heaven, and hence we are to set our minds on the things above and not on things on earth. In the plain but penetrating words of D. L. Moody we have this thought illustrated. "I have known men," said he, "who have been up in balloons, and they have told me that when they want to rise higher they

just throw out some of the sand with which they ballast the balloon. Now, I believe one reason why so many people are earthly-minded and have so little of the spirit of heaven, is that they have got too much ballast in the shape of love for earthly joys and gains; and what you want is to throw out some of the sand, and you will rise higher."

In the midst of an environment which constantly seeks to pull us downward morally and to dim the light within, our hope is the unbroken contact with our God, that we "may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man." A naturalist tells us that in observing flies as they bathed in a little stream, he noticed that while they plunged their bodies in the water they kept their wings high out of it, and after swimming about for awhile they would fly away with their wings still dry. Thus it should be with us: while immersed in a thousand cares of our earthly life we need to keep the wings of the soul out of the tempting but dangerous pools of pagan living all about us.

Are we seeking to answer the challenge to live in this world the risen life with our Lord?

Oh, let me know
The power of the resurrection;
Oh, let me show
Thy risen life in calm and clear reflection;

Oh, let me give
Out of the gifts thou freely gavest;
Oh, let me live
With life abundantly because thou livest.

The words of the text not only remind us that new life is communicated to us by the risen Saviour and that we are challenged to live out that life worthily in the world, but that life is continuous.

The life commenced here will continue to glorious consummation in the afterlife. It is incomplete here but will be complete there. "When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory." Jesus the night before the crucifixion sought to encourage his disciples that death was not the end for them. "Because I live, ye shall live also." The heart of mortal man has always yearned for immortality. This question cannot be proved to another, like a problem in mathematics, for truly has it been said, "We do not believe in immortality because we can prove it, but we try to prove it because we cannot help believing it."

Even the heart of the agnostic is not free from the pull of immortality. Robert G. Ingersoll said at the grave of his brother: "Life is a narrow vale between the cold and barren peaks of two eternities. We strive in vain to look beyond the heights; we cry aloud and the only answer is the echo of our wailing cry. From the voiceless lips of the unreplying dead there comes no word; but in the night of death hope sees a star and listening love can hear the rustle of a wing." Thomas Huxley, skeptical of religion, wrote to Charles Kingsley a few days after his four-year-old boy had died: "As I stood beside the coffin of my little son the other day . . . . the minister read . . . . 'If the dead rise not? Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we die.' . . . . I cannot tell you how inexpressibly this shocked me. . . . . Why, the very apes know better."

Dr. Arthur H. Compton, professor of physics in the University of Chicago and president of the Scientists Organization in America, said: "Speaking, now, not as a scientist but as man to man, how can a father who loves his children choose to have them die? As long as there is in heaven a God of love, there must be for God's children everlasting life. This is not

the cold logic of science but the warm faith of a father who has seen his child on the brink of death."

> Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
> Thou madest man, he knows not why,
> He thinks he was not made to die;
> And Thou hast made him: Thou art just.

Franklin K. Lane, Secretary of the Interior under President Wilson, expressed his feelings on immortality in a letter: "The only miracle I care about is the resurrection. If we live again, we certainly have reason for living now. I think this belief is the foundation hope of religion."

All who trust Christ should have an increasing certainty in their hearts as to the life beyond. We do not think this confidence comes primarily from outside proofs, but by reason of the fact that the question of immortality is tied up with our belief in God as our loving Father and because of the value of the human soul as declared by Christ. In fact, when one examines any of the major beliefs of the Christian he will find that it is linked in some way to the hope of the resurrection. We believe today that the life which God has communicated to us is continuous

and unbroken by the experience we call death. "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. . . . . O death, where is thy sting? . . . . but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

A man on his eighty-sixth birthday, in answer to the question as to how he felt toward the next life, at his age, said: "I have naturally been thinking much of that during recent years. I have stood in the shadows of bereavement many times and sought to comfort sorrowing hearts, and now in my declining days I can say, I am not half so sure what the future life is as I was forty years ago. But I am twice as sure that it is."

"I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

A tourist in Switzerland asked a boy the way to a certain city. The lad replied, "I do not know, sir,

where Kandersteg is, but there is the road to it." We know the direction and the way that leads to the Eternal City of God, and that is the assurance our hearts need. We have the word of Him who said, "I was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore."

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